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**Technologies for the Self:
Japanese Women in the UK and Their Media**

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2015

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Abstract

This thesis argues that the strategic use of popular media texts and their technologies are reflective of how the Japanese women I interviewed are able to explore new and diverse cultural practices, reaffirm those practices they are familiar with, and offer a forum from which to confidently construct and contest personal and social boundaries. Everything in life changes, but the fact that we are social beings embedded in social networks remains the same. Media practice changes too, as do the purposes to which it is put and how it meets the needs of the user. Media use remains constant in the lives of my interlocutors, despite the changing technologies and the changing circumstances of their lives and their families. Because of its quotidian nature, media practice supports the continuous formation of the Japanese self and it encourages particular expressions of agency. This thesis is also a direct response for the need for an agenda of research that increases our understanding of how media aids in the production of self and subjectivity.

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Japanese spellings use the Hepburn romanisation based on English phonology
 Japanese names are given in the Western manner with given name first and surname second except in the case of historical figures.

Non-participants of this study are indicated by an initial only to denote their status, this is used primarily for the partners and children of the interviewees.

Media references are cited in the Bibliography according to the MLA formatting regulations.

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Chapter One: Introduction and the Theoretical Framework

1.1 The Starting Point

This thesis is the result of an investigation into the long-term media practices of a small group of Japanese women who are resident in the UK. The term ‘media’ is used throughout this document to refer inclusively to the electronic media of film, television, internet, radio and recorded music and the print media of books, magazines and newspapers. The enquiry was designed as a project that would incorporate the qualitative research methods of anthropology using ethnographic processes in order to map out the uses and meanings of media texts, practices and the associated technologies for a particular group of social subjects within a particular social context. This ethnography is an account that is rooted in the effort to understand the tapestry of changes to self and agency that I witnessed in the social lives of my interlocutors. I examine how these media practices, which originate in the home, can be seen to work hand in hand with normative social discourses to produce new and unexpected subjectivities.

The key research question that emerged from my initial proposal was simple, namely, how are Japanese women using television and other media in their daily lives as British residents? In other words, what are they watching, and why? This broadly stated query was then honed into more specific questions designed to understand the role of media and media practice in the ongoing construction and reconstruction of social spaces and relations (Morley 1992, 2000). These more refined considerations queried the role of television as an example of cross-demographic communication (Hartley 1999) for non-native audiences. In addition, I explored the possibility of connecting the experience of watching television, which is primarily a domestic activity, with the cosmopolitan imagination that can inspire and motivate groups and individuals to experience new places and societies. Although television was the primary research focus to begin with, it became evident within the first two weeks of fieldwork that the position of television in the home has been irrevocably altered with the onset of digital media forms and technologies. It became apparent that the significance of my research would have been severely compromised if I were to limit the scope of appraisal to television only. My research considerations were then

widened to include questions that reflect the subjectivity inherent in daily media use, such as how do these women creatively manipulate popular media texts and technologies to their own cultural, ideological and economic ends? How, as users of mass mediated product, are they imbricated in other discursive patterns and networks not just within the home but also within the wider community? I also considered the possibility that elements of their native Japanese culture were being passed on to their children via the mediated choices they make. The data that are outlined in this thesis belie the simplicity of the original query. The essential yet unexpected theme that has emerged from this study is that of the changes experienced by my interlocutors – changes to agency, to home and family, and to the media practices that are under scrutiny.

The impetus for a study of this nature was in part derived from the research I conducted for my MA dissertation (Simpson 2006, unpublished). This project served to outline the patterns of agency that resulted in the distribution and success of the film *Old Boy* (2003) by Park Chan-wook in the UK. During the course of my investigation I found that it was more appropriate to think of the audience as proactive agents, individuals who used their lived practices of media use to inform their understanding of themselves and of their place in global society. Thus the inherent challenge of this research was to formulate an approach that would allow me to integrate media and its attendant practices within the terms of the processes of urbanisation and globalisation. It was therefore necessary to consider the role of media as part of the ongoing processes of interconnection, construction and reconstruction of the self and its social world that is constituted within a Japanese and British cultural framework (Kondo 1990, Morley 1980).

This thesis indicates how media practice provides vital moments in the production of meaning for the building of selfhood through media use (Hall 1980). The importance of a study of this nature becomes apparent when considering that the experience of the Japanese diaspora is increasingly expressed within the social and cultural environment of the UK. This is evident through the increasing prevalence of Japanese-style restaurants, fast-food outlets and karaoke bars in most UK cities. This also includes the commercial success of Japanese graphic novels (*manga*), cartoons (*anime*) and the

increasing profile of Anglo-Japanese personalities in the British media.¹ There is evidence that the Japanese population is taking note of the British media environment itself. In 2008, HSBC, one of the world's largest banking organisations came under fire from the Japanese community in the UK for using an overweight white man in a wig and eye makeup to portray a traditional *sumo* wrestler.² In light of these observations alone, it is clear that there is a need to pay attention to the media experiences of this particular diasporic group in order to better understand the current theoretical debates about the dynamics of globalisation and social change. In this study the focus begins and remains in the domestic space as the primary site of media practice. This is the starting point for the variety of social processes that inevitably reflect how media anchors, and is anchored by, culture and social practice, and is articulated in particular ways by individuals who share a common cultural grounding.

The title of the thesis takes its cue from Michel Foucault's *Technologies of the Self* which refers to how the individual acts upon and transforms the self, in order to achieve a way of being that is capable of "happiness, purity, perfection, immortality" (1988:18). From this perspective, taking care of one's self and engineering a coherent sense of self becomes a constant practice and quite literally a lifelong project, yet one that is determined by "strange strategies and power relationships" (ibid:15). Foucault has divided these technologies into four components that he suggests are interlinked and somewhat interdependent in that an individual 'technology' does not appear in isolation to the others. However in order to clarify the association between Foucault's framework of personal ethic and this thesis, I am taking a deliberately literal interpretation of this construction. In the chapters that follow I refer to the media experiences of the Japanese women I interviewed and enumerate how their personal and individual experience with media throughout their lives to date is so integral to how they live that it can effectively be described as employing technologies *for* the self. My intention is to provide an overview of how the techniques of media use play a constitutive role and are an integral component of how the individual acts upon the self in order to understand how the person, the individual, becomes a subject of its own creation (Foucault 1980). And the place that I start from is the home, a key site

¹ Notable examples are the celebrity chef Jun Tanaka, the actor Naoko Mori and the now retired but much admired professional football player for Celtic, Shinsuke Nakamura.

² From The Guardian website, "Bank loses face over Brian the sumo fake". First retrieved 28 August 2008 <http://www.theguardian.com/business/2008/aug/24/hsbcholdings.banking>

of self-awareness for the majority of the world's populace. Or to rephrase Morley (2000:3), my argument is that one way that the articulation of self can be understood is to focus on the role of media and communication technologies in the home. This exploration of the patterns of media use by Japanese women in the UK is motivated by the need to understand the relationship between the symbolic and the material elements of culture that reflect the lived practices of a particular community in a particular time and place (Morley and Robins 1995). My research project is also a response to Siverstone and Hirsch's call for a closer examination of the "complex interrelationships of cultures and technologies as they emerge in the practices of institutions and individuals, and through the unequal but never totally determining or determined relations of public and private spheres" (1992:26). The chapters that follow provide an acknowledgment of how "technologies are both shaped and shaping" by the individual (ibid).

The data I have gathered and presented here are the product of the long-term relationships I shared with the Japanese women who participated in this study. They gave of their time and narratives willingly and unselfishly and the media biographies they provided are the main units of analysis. It is important to stress that although I interview, and refer to the interviewees, as individuals, what lies at the heart of this study of media practice is what Kondo describes as "the fundamental interconnectedness of human beings to each other" (1990:9). The Japanese women I spoke to as individuals were articulated within a gendered field of social relationships that ebbed and flowed, moved and changed with time and experience, yet remained ever-present. This multiplicity of social and personal roles and the fluidity that this implies serves to articulate a Japanese self that is most meaningful when entwined within the social networks that make up everyday life (cf. Nakane 1970, Lebra 1984, Kondo ibid).

Locating these practices within a specifically Japanese discourse is to acknowledge that the subjects of this investigation into media practice and self emerge from a specific cultural condition that produces a particular matrix of social relations (Butler 1993). Gilroy refers to this orientation as an "anti-anti essentialism" that acknowledges the social context of the "racialised subjectivity" rather than an attempt to claim specific attributes to a specific collective (1993:102). I am also addressing

what I perceive to be a gap in the existing literature, because although there have been studies of Japanese wives in the United States (Kurotani 2005), Japanese communities in the North East of England (Conte-Helm 1989), and more recently Japanese housewives in the United Kingdom (Martin 2007) there has been no reference to the role of media in their lives. The introductory chapters are divided into two with the first chapter outlining the theoretical backbone of the thesis. The second is focussed on the methodological approach to the research, an introduction to the interlocutors and an overview of the organisation of the thesis.

1.2 The Self and Technologies

My intention is to incorporate Foucault's recognition of the self as a subject under continuous construction and reformation (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). In order to establish what I mean by the word 'self' as concisely as possible, I employ the term following Spiro's argument that the self constitutes a singular consciousness that is capable of self-representation (1993). Being that I asked my interlocutors to 'self-represent' through their own narratives, Spiro's position is especially appropriate. I must distinguish here between the 'self' as an entity capable of self-representation and the Japanese social self. For the purposes of this thesis I am deliberately drawing attention to the former in order to position the use of narrative as a methodology.

The concept of the socialised self is worth a brief consideration here.³ Both Martinez (2004) and Rosenberger (2015) note that there are Confucian roots to the idea of the Japanese self as embedded within the social whole. The individual is thus compelled to participate in a reflexive positioning vis à vis one's social group which in turn determines how the individual self performs his or her role in society. This positioning of the self is related to the discourse of the 'dividual' as outlined by Strathern in that "society is seen to be what connects individuals to one another, the relationships between them" (1988:12). This connected Japanese dividual self can be contrasted with the Western valorisation of the bounded individual, whereby the needs and desires of the single actor are seen to take priority over any social obligations.

³ I expand on the role of specifically Japanese social discourses, and their relevance to this research, later in the chapter.

I consider the social tools inherent in native Japanese culture as another, yet definitely non-Western, form of technologies of the self. By using the term ‘technologies’ to refer to both the internal logistics of self formation and the media hardware which delivers textual information, I am stressing that ‘technology’ implies the practical application of knowledge through systematic processes (Williams 1976:315). This is in keeping with Foucault’s use of technologies for the self in that he had begun to examine how the self constituted itself as a knowing subject (1992) and how the truths that the self discovers about itself are determined by the self-knowledge that makes one an object of discourse and therefore an object of power/knowledge (1980). Just as the self becomes its own technologist in the quest to know itself, both media texts and the hardware become implicit tools of the process of becoming.

Foucault’s life objective was to understand the ways in which society forms knowledge about itself, not as truths, but as truth games (1988). Foucault gave the following technologies that he had identified as being specific techniques that people use to understand themselves and the ‘truth games’ they find themselves in,

(1) technologies of production, which permit us to produce, transform, or manipulate things; (2) technologies of sign systems, which permit us to use signs, meanings, symbols, or signification; (3) technologies of power, which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends or domination, and objectivising of the subject; (4) technologies of the self, which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and a way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality (ibid:18).

As outlined by Foucault, these technologies are modern-day representations along the lines of early Greco-Roman philosophy which encouraged care of the self and the ethics of the self. He argues that the hermeneutics of self-knowledge took a different turn under the onset of Christianity with a renunciation of the self and the formation of the confessional self. In contrast to the Western development of self-awareness, it is generally recognised that Japanese history and social structure has brought about particular ways of thinking about the self and self-knowledge (cf. Nakane 1970, Lebra

1976, Smith 1983, Plath 1980, Mathews 1996). Whereas Foucault (1976) pointed to the promise of an underlying productive nature of the power inherent in social institutions in Western society I am turning this premise towards the potential for becoming that lies within the traditions and strictures of Japanese society. This is a recognition that there are different ways of being a person in the world, and that these different ways are often attached to a particular place (Butler 1993). These matrices of social relations serve as a basis for mutual understanding of the self with others from a shared background. Yet, despite the shared background of mutual understanding, media practice can be seen to problematise and challenge normative Japanese social discourses and consequently produce new concepts of what is 'normal' (Harvey 1998). These new articulations of self are further prompted by contingencies such as gender and class. Hall notes that in addition to internalising "the resources of history, language and culture in the processes of becoming", these resources also reveal to the individual the potential of the self and how this self may or may not be represented (ibid:4). Media practice can be seen to inspire or influence the particular agency of the subject, and in the case of my interlocutors, can be seen to aid and abet their positioning as Japanese women in Britain.

With the development of technological innovations from the printing press onwards the production and circulation of symbolic media texts established a 'mediasation of culture' which in turn initiated the cultural transformations associated with modern social life (Thompson 1995). In today's modernity, national idioms and core symbols can be deployed on internet sites in a context that is accessible to all interested parties and the size of the viewing population is continuing to expand across the globe. Abu-Lughod (2004) has framed the relationship between mass media and national subjects as consisting of encounters between two sorts of performative subjects – those who produce national texts for an imagined audience and the audience members who select, interpret and evaluate what is being produced, always within the context of their everyday lives. In this transnational context, everyday social practices should be counted as sites of resistance (de Certeau 1984), for these practices do not exist in a vacuum and these practices in turn will have global implications. The media choices made by a marginal audience will be subject to an interpretation that will suit that individual's needs, which may be rather different from that of the non-marginal individual. These social practices are dependent on a fluid, practically infinite

circulation of images, texts and technologies, and the motivations of my interlocutors illustrate the range of personal yet socially determined strategies that they are able to employ in order to gratify their perceived needs and desires.

The modern image culture of the late twentieth and early twenty first centuries has offered up a multitude of subject positions through the texts of popular culture which in turn help to structure the identificatory self (Hall and Du Gay 1996; Morley 1980; Durham and Kellner 2001; Thompson 1995). The ongoing creative process of self construction becomes subject to new determinants and inflections which hold the potential for previously unforeseen options of restructuring one's sense of self. As a consequence of engaging in the process of interpreting symbolic forms, individuals incorporate these forms into their own understanding of themselves and others by using these innovative interpretations as a vehicle for self-reflection and as a means of reviewing what they understand about the world to which they belong (Thompson *ibid*). In this way media use and practice is able to breach boundaries between social conventions and communities, thus providing intense and multiple encounters with different ideas and sensibilities (Webster and Phalen 1997).

1.3 *Ikigai* and Agency

The gendered focus of this study requires an analysis of the role of Japanese women in and outside of Japanese society in order to gain a grounded perspective of a gender that has shown itself to be multifaceted, context dependent and flexible in both the native setting and the global milieu (cf. Lebra 1984, Hamabata 1990, Matsunaga 2000, Kelsky 2001, Martinez 2004, White 2002). I have chosen to highlight the variable nature of Japanese womanhood within the context of this thesis via specifically Japanese social discourses. The media practices that my interlocutors have employed as technologies for the self throughout this study can be seen to offer the possibility of new sociabilities that inform these articulations of self. Japanese social discourses are implicated here as hermeneutic devices in order to better understand how everyday social relations are articulated and performed with regards to media practice. The social discourses that stem from the particular social matrices in Japan that the participants emerged from provide identification with the normative (Butler 1993) yet offer the flexibility that allows my interlocutors to operate outside the established and more traditional norms of Japanese womanhood. I have identified

three such discourses (*ikigai*, *uchi/soto*, *seken*), as components of the Japanese social self within the context of this thesis and they will be explained in detail in the following sections. These discourses will serve as examples of how media practice works to breach the normalising rules of social behaviour in Japanese society. Discourse in this context is seen as a particularly distinctive way in which social groups come to frame and perceive ‘reality’ (Mills 2003). This view of ‘discourse’ is in line with Foucault’s own change in focus with regard to how discourses can be seen to both exert contingencies on people and yet be a force for knowledge that determines the individual’s own adaptations (Gauntlett 2002). The discourses that I have specified here are not intended to be definitive examples of how media practice works to reposition the Japanese subject but I have incorporated them because I have found them to be “good to think” (Levi-Strauss 1962) within the context of this research. By using Levi-Strauss’ famous quote I am suggesting my own classificatory approach to thinking about the problem rather than a retreat into structural analysis. These discourses also serve to provide a way into a discussion of the range of relevant literature about the Japanese self.

The Japanese discourse of *ikigai* translates as that which makes life worth living, or that which makes life worthwhile and fulfilling, and this principle is a key motivation for both women and men in Japanese society (Lebra 1984, Kondo 1990, Mathews 1996, Plath 1980). According to Mathews, the expression of *ikigai* is formulated and shaped over an individual’s lifetime, which in turn serves to justify their expression of *ikigai* in order to maintain a sense of personal satisfaction. Lebra presents a more static expression of *ikigai* in that the women she interviewed in the 1970s (the eldest were born in the 1890s) found their *ikigai* through their roles as mothers and were “intensely filiocentric” to the point of enduring marital difficulties and other hardships in order to maintain a secure family life for their children (ibid:161). However, she concedes that as Japanese women’s roles change through their lives and through modernity, there are new ways of attaining fulfilment through redefining one’s *ikigai*. This restructuring of a woman’s heartfelt desire can be traced to social and lifestyle changes as the individual moves into maturity (Plath ibid). Although I offer a critique of Mathews’ oversimplification of the levels of cultural shaping of *ikigai* in Chapter Five, there are two key points to note here. The first is that he ascribes the drive to fulfil one’s heartfelt *ikigai* to an agency that is often in conflict with expected

normative behaviour.⁴ And the second important component is that just as Lebra had noted, one's *ikigai* can change and alter according to a person's particular life stage. This characteristic of *ikigai* is also evident in Kelsky's account of transnational Japanese women (2001), whereby the *ikigai* of young Japanese women is further linked to the complex networks of socio-economic location with gendered, national and generational subjectivities all playing an integral part that has resulted in today's Japanese woman looking beyond their borders for what constitutes a desirable life for them as individuals (ibid:90).

Kelsky further identifies the globally circulated images of the West as one of the mediated protagonists in exploiting the trope of the "sophisticated globe trotting woman" and she implicates American movies in particular which construct America and the West into an imaginary centre of the universe, one which subsequently becomes the inevitable destination of women fleeing the more restrictive practices of their birth nations (2001: 11). She also cites the role of an imagination inspired by media images as providing the material for subversion of the international variety, an approach initiated by Appadurai's observation that the "terms of the negotiation between imagined lives and deterritorialised worlds are complex, and they surely cannot be captured by the localizing strategies to traditional ethnography alone" (1996: 52). This sums up how a study of media can both be ground in the quotidian practices of individuals yet are not quite quantifiable in the standard ethnographic manner. These mediated practices are a profound act of the imagination, which nonetheless constitute very concrete expressions of a potentially fluid and changeable self.

Foucault's interpretation of agency implies that power as a capacity to exercise productive effects relies on an understanding of agency within power (1981). In my understanding, this agency expresses itself in the context of Japanese women in the UK as a personal social practice but one that is infused with the determinate power of self that encourages a positive engagement with the other. The overt implication of this shifts the power of the text to the power of the media practitioner to shape meaning and experience. To use media in this way, that is, in conjunction with

⁴ One example that Mathews provides is of a sixty year old calligrapher who walked out of a prestigious salaried position in order to pursue his more artistic *ikigai* (ibid:726).

movement and migration, is an integral part of the imaginative processes of cultural reproduction and maintenance. Lebra (2004) makes a clear distinction between individuality and agency in which the former is a particularly Western concept that arose out of very particular social and cultural formations and practices, whereas the idea of personal agency is prevalent in Japanese and other cultures. This personal agency can be recast as resistance in a way that exceeds subjectivity and is instead situated in the play of social and cultural forces on the one hand and personal desire and intentionality on the other. The question is, how does this agency find articulation in culturally sanctioned Japanese behaviours and lifestyles, and I argue that particular expressions of agency are stimulated through the drive to fulfil a person's *ikigai*. Although I emphasise the role of *ikigai* most explicitly in Chapter Five, it must be understood from the outset that the women I interviewed came to the UK in order to find a life that satisfied their dreams and desires as Japanese women.

By considering how media serves as a technology for the self is to think about how media practice forms, and is informed by, the manner by which individuals work on themselves in order to achieve a viable and presentational self. Viewing media and its associated practices in this way requires that the processes of becoming that are under scrutiny in this thesis must necessarily be regarded as transitional and changeable and this is very much the case for my interlocutors. Media use becomes a site of identification whereby “media-oriented practices” become part of how an individual relates to various circumstances in their lives and how they talk about themselves (Couldry 2010:47). In this manner media use can be seen to be an integral source that feeds into how a Japanese woman may come to formulate her *ikigai* at a particular point in time.

1.4 *Uchi/Soto* and the Shifting Boundaries of Place, Family and Gender

The word *uchi* means home in Japanese. *Uchi* also means inside and is therefore synonymous with family and in-group. It refers to a protected interior that is closed to those who do not belong (White 2002:203). This is in contrast to *uchi*'s paired term *soto*, which refers to outside but also implies everything that is outside of the safety and intimacy of *uchi*. As such, *uchi* as home and inside is a term loaded with gendered meaning and inflection. The paired use of *uchi/soto* as a discourse is important in the context of this thesis as I argue that media practice serves to breach

this duality by allowing a wide variety of strange and fantastical media texts into the home in a completely unremarkable manner. This position is in line with Morley's call for a greater understanding of the articulation between the domestic sphere and the construction of transnational identities by focussing on the role of media (2000). He draws attention to how media and their related technologies serve to transgress the boundary between the public and private world at home and how this experience works to produce "the coherence of broader social experience" (ibid:3). This perspective adheres to Foucault's call for a greater understanding of the articulation between space and power as it applies from the "grand strategies of geo-politics" to the "little tactics of the habitat" (1980:149). But before discussing the situational relevance of *uchi/soto* as a dual concept, it is worth noting how the principle of *uchi* as home (and *ie* as household) has developed in post-war Japan. As my interlocutors vary in age and grew up through several decades of post-war Japan, their own experiences with what constitutes a viable family life must be taken into account.

The Japanese anthropologist Chie Nakane, though not a regional specialist (her ethnographic focus was North India), developed a model of social construction based on vertical patterns of group solidarity and identity (1970). Despite framing her theory on the dynamics of the male world of employment and labour, her theory is grounded in the groupist orientation of the 'traditional' Japanese *ie* (she refers to *uchi* as the colloquial form of *ie*⁵), which is the dynastic household, a space in which the relations between male and female were learned, lived, and negotiated. The politisation of the household was introduced as a nation building tool in the Meiji era (1868-1912) in which Japan was imagined as an Emperor led family nation. It was the official establishment of an indigenous family arrangement that introduced Confucian ideals and principles as the ideal ethical and moral system for all of society to abide by and not just the elite classes as was the case previously. Men were proclaimed superior to women, marriages were arranged, and women were taught that total obedience to father, husband, his parents and finally to her son when widowed was the only acceptable way to behave. As outsiders brought into the *ie*, married women were further subjugated to the whims and potentially cruel fancies of their mother-in-

⁵ Bachnik notes that Nakane's conflation of *uchi* and *ie* is especially problematic due to the groupist orientation implied by Nakane's analysis. Bachnik argues that this conflation omits the "particular social group" or the "immediate social frame" that is crucial to the use of *uchi* as situational (1994:156).

law. However, Hendry points out that in many parts of the country women played a much stronger role in household life than these Confucian-based norms would suggest (1987:27).

With such politicised social structures in place it is apparent that there is potential conflict between the stated ideal role of women in the eyes of the dominant gender and the actual lived practices of the women they are meant to suppress. An example of the difference between the ideal and the lived practice is described by Hamabata in his description of the House of Moriuchi dynasty (1994). On the one hand Grandfather's published memoirs attribute the success of the dynasty to male self sacrifice and hard work. On the other hand, the 'women's lore' ascribes a very different dynamic at work in keeping the Moriuchi household a viable commercial proposition in the post-Meiji era. Grandmother's story was about how a socially inferior woman was skilfully able to deal with the social networks and tyrannical husband she found herself saddled with in order make a significant contribution to the success of the Moriuchi enterprise.

White's examination of the Meiji and subsequent post-war models of the ideal national family reveals how the concept of the ideal family was "interpreted – or ignored – in the strategies and goals of ordinary people" (2002: 5). The concept of the ideal family remains a politically contested issue today, with politicians and policy makers trying to perfect some ideal in the nation's psyche. After WWII, the template of the family was once again manipulated to serve the mass national rebuilding project that faced Japan in the aftermath. Reconstruction was best served through what appeared to be the Western ideal of the nuclear family, but Japan was also faced with the potential for massive public service spending on matters such as childcare and care for the elderly if this route was pursued too vigorously. Once again the ideal was manipulated to extol the virtues of the extended family, much like the 'traditional' (i.e. post-Meiji) household of the nostalgic past. This model of course resulted in once again limiting women's participation in work outside the home. On the other hand, White's experience as a new mother faced with the full onslaught of Confucian based patriarchal attitudes (so far as to be criticised in the national press) allowed her to experience living both the model and the actual complexities of family life in modern Japan. She found that many of her friends were "not sticking to the

standard menus of approved family behaviour and were constructing their very own personal strategies and modes” for dealing with the realities of living a family life (ibid:1).

However there is historical precedence for the emergence of Japanese women acting on newly articulated expressions of agency. Silverberg (2007) cites the modern urban practices of product consumption as the main source of empowerment that gave support to these new found expressions of womanhood in Japan that were at odds with the traditional expected role and well established discourse of women as ‘good wife, wise mother’ (*ryōsei kenbo*). This term represents an idealised traditional role model for women that came to prominence during Japan’s modernisation in the Meiji era (1868-1912). In fact the reinvention of Japanese womanhood has been an ongoing project for the nation since the turn of the last century. Suzuki (2010) illustrates the ways in which modern Japanese female identity was constructed, questioned, and rewritten during the pre-war period. Her exploration illuminates the intersection of gender and modernity in the seminal years before WWII. Even through what we would consider to be the pre-modern years of the early twentieth century women were transforming themselves using technologies of the self, transforming their “bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct and way of being” through “their own means or with the help of others” in order to attain a higher state of existence (Foucault 1970:7). This is not so different from the expressions of agency that Japanese women are incorporating in the creation of personal subjectivities today. This thesis argues that these subjectivities often find their source through mediated practices that begin in the domestic sphere. What remains the same for my interlocutors is the quest to find the true self and to live a life that allows this responsibility to the self to be fulfilled. But this personal expression of “agency is not necessarily an individual based and person centred process but one that can and does manifest itself in and through networks of interaction” (Dissanayake 1996:xiv).

Lebra’s (1984) work on what she identifies as the constraints and fulfilments of Japanese women exposes the complexities and contradictions so cherished by Orientalist orthodoxies. She points out how the women she has interviewed are finding pathways of personal fulfilment within, for the most part, expected roles and standards of behaviour for Japanese women in modern society (although as noted

previously she was interviewing women who had entered maturity after WWII). Yes, they may appear to be doting mothers, but they also recognised that they sometimes find their child's controlling behaviour as a source of resentment. But that is not to say that they were unable to recognise their own maturity as individuals in the acceptance of such behaviour. Or, in the case of the intense mother/son bond, this was seen in part as a form of economic insurance against a potential future divorce. These subversions are played out against a backdrop of masculine-determined limitations and exclusions that were particularly pronounced at the time of Lebra's research. However, it must be taken into account that Lebra's interviewees admittedly felt that they had empowered themselves and strengthened their personal positions against such structures by using the culturally determined attributes of the domestic sphere as their source of power.

Yet the application of the concept of *uchi* is not limited to just the nuclear (or extended) family in Japan. Kondo's study of life in a small confectionary in Tokyo was crucial in outlining the manner in which notions of self are fluid and changeable. She argues that the Japanese self is part of an ongoing project of agency, that individuals continuously "create, construct, work on and enact their identities", and that this process involves creatively challenging the limits of social and cultural constraints they find themselves in (1990: 48). She finds that her female co-workers are excluded from the masculine artisanal identity, marginalised by their part-time status and conversely, by the discourse of *uchi* as it applies to the company (*uchi no kaisha*). But Kondo filters these exclusions through a lens of class and status, one which highlights the shared identities and sharp differences between women. She highlights the manner in which her female co-workers were able to use the culturally available tools at their disposal to create little subversions for themselves in order to reassert their own identities in the matrix of power relations on the factory floor (ibid: 259). Kondo has also implicated Foucault's thesis of power/knowledge in her description of *uchi no kaisha* as arenas for the contestation of power and as an example of the generative properties of power. The employees of the confectionary where she worked often challenged the boundaries and precise meanings of *uchi* after discussions at the factory and the concept "was appropriated and transformed by actors in a multiplicity of creative ways" (ibid:184).

The above examples indicate the fluidity and flexibility of the normative family structure in addition to the changing role of women in Japanese society. Although the Japanese language is awash with paired terms of similar significance which have been noted and expanded upon, for example *omote/ura* (front and back) or *honne/tatemae* (true feelings and public behaviour) (cf. Doi 1986, Hendry 1987) it is the directional coordinates of *uchi/soto* which are basic to the other paired terms as well which make this particular pairing the most essential of all the terms. The concept of *uchi* as consisting of home and family is part of a gendered discourse as is clear from the literature, and this implies that notions of self are derived from one's experience and participation as an insider member to a family group. This is a useful introduction into another aspect of Japanese gender identity formation in the recognition of the situational self (Bachnik and Quinn 1994). This approach looks at a more horizontal construction of Japanese society and especially focuses on the relational concepts of *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside). By examining the Japanese through their own situated rubric, anthropologists have tried to account for the 'remarkably flexible social world' they bear witness for (Brenneis 1994: ix). As Kondo's account indicates, the *uchi/soto* rubric can be seen to be not only situated within the physical space of home but also functions contextually to indicate in-group status. In her monograph on the Japanese diving women of Kuzaki, Martinez argues that the *uchi/soto* opposition also:

...depends on the interpenetration of one by the other in order for the social to exist. Thus, on the one hand it is possible to construct a sense of belonging or *uchi* that is contextual—that is, dependent on place, time, and opposition to that which is outside (*soto*): the family versus village, the village versus the city, the city versus the next prefecture, and so on (2004:62).

Given that the paired term of *uchi/soto* is at once both situational and contextual depending on the circumstances, the very quality of its oppositional duality is what makes this concept inescapable with regard to media use in the home. The visual technologies that receive these images for the families in their homes inevitably bring images and ideas from the outside into the private and personal inside space. I argue in Chapter Four that this particular attribute in part accounts for the burgeoning sense of cosmopolitanism that is evident in my interlocutors' narratives. I also implicate the

same duality with the reception of the images from the Tohoku disaster in Chapters Eight and Nine.

Throughout this text I refer to the performativity of gender as expressed by my interlocutors in a manner that follows Butler's premise of gender as culturally constructed and performative in execution (1990:6). The nuanced manifestations of Japanese womanhood I describe in this thesis can be seen to "constitute the identity it is purported to be" (ibid:25), meaning that my participants could not be mistaken for anything other than female. Butler notes that the gendered self is not just a performative configuration that arises from a blank slate, but that the nature of this configuration is determined by a 'cultural matrix' that determines what is possible, and how to make it so, for the subject. By being born under a matrix of Japanese social practices, my interlocutors were faced with a "regulation of identificatory practices" which provide the subject with a framework of how to be a Japanese woman (1993:7). There is no space for a repudiation of these frameworks (I am acknowledging the existence of a multiplicity of normative standards) as otherwise the subject would be unable to self-identify as Japanese, much less as a woman.

1.5 *Seken* as Society

As outlined previously, this thesis is based on the premise that a subject's sense of selfhood is in some ways developed and performed within the parameters of a mediated social life. This position must also include an acknowledgement of the strong sentiments that unite a community into a bounded and organised social grouping (Barth 1969, Williams 1976). The self-acknowledged cultural bond of a shared origin of language and social practices that my interlocutors experience serves as a basis for a particular category of social environment in that it crosses boundaries between physical and online locations. One function of this environment is to bind together this population as an imagined social community (Anderson 2006) that establishes a resourceful co-existence within the British networks and communities that they now reside in. The need to communicate and establish networks with and between others is in contrast with the erotic self expression that Kelsky identifies as a key source for the modern defection of young Japanese women to the West (2001). This is not to suggest that the women I spoke to came to the UK in search of specifically Japanese networks to engage with, but rather that participating in

networks with other Japanese friends and family both ‘in real life’ and online becomes an important element in their British lives. In Rosenberger’s analysis of the Japanese domestic environment she noted that gender can only be understood within relationships “which themselves are interpretable only from the perspective of a field of differences among multiple relationships in a number of contexts” (ibid: 108). The following section aims to provide a gendered theoretical backdrop to the nebulous principle of *seken* in Japanese society.

Ruth Benedict provided an early ethnographic analysis of Japanese society, and based her results on the patterns of national character that she found through interviews with Japanese prisoners of war in the notorious internment camps in the United States during World War II (1946). By acknowledging a capacity for docility and violence Benedict outlined culturally determined, multiple social roles and obligations that individuals were required to fulfil. These multiple circles of obligation were communicated practically at infancy and imbedded the rules of Japanese culture almost before a child could speak. In order to be part of Japanese society it was essential to be aware that the failure to follow the rules of good behaviour, that is, to balance obligations and reciprocal behaviour. According to Benedict, the primacy of shame means that an individual judges herself through the judgement of others (ibid: 224). This early acknowledgment of the contextual and socio-centric quality of Japanese social life is reflected in the discourse of *seken*, which broadly refers to the entire network of social relations that surround an individual (Kurihara 2007)

Plath compares how the East-West dialogue differs with regards to the position, or value, of the self’s relationship with society (1980). He notes that in the Western perspective, “individuality is God-given” and that we as individuals are born free (ibid:216). To Western sensibilities, social participation serves to weaken us, and as individuals the highest self is realised outside of social conformity. He contrasts this with the Japanese orientation, whereby the individual enters into social relations not from weakness, but for human strength. The struggle in life derives not from striving for individuality but from finding the most effective way to carry out one’s responsibilities to others without “diminishing one’s playful response to them” (ibid:217). He states that the Japanese cultural nightmare is to be excluded from others, for this renders one unable to do anything with one’s personality (ibid). For

the Japanese self, social exclusion is ultimately a form of depersonalisation as the individual would find her/himself in a kind of negative state that could no longer give or receive the nourishment of personal attention. What Plath highlights is in fact the importance of human relations within Japanese society and how these relations serve to make the individual more human, rather than to submerge the self into a morass of conformity as implied in Western Judeo-Christian thinking. Plath concludes that the Japanese self is differentiated from the Western self as a product of relationships.

Sugimoto specifically notes that *seken* exists as an imagined but realistic entity that presents itself as a “web of people who provide the moral yardsticks that favour the status quo and traditional practices” (2010:301). Furthermore, *seken* imposes negative constraints on the individual. Martinez adds more depth to the meaning of *seken* and argues that “its usage often implies a person’s awareness of others’ opinions and it can be felt as a very heavy weight” (2004:15). The presentational self, as outlined by Lebra, is prone to the demands of *seken*, which she describes as “the world of audience” (1992:107). She provides a definition of *seken* in her earlier volume on Japanese women that vividly outlines the all-encompassing nature of this particular audience: *seken* is “the surrounding world or community consisting of neighbours, kin, colleagues, friends and other significant persons whose opinions are considered important” (1984:338). Yet the awareness of, and sensitivity to, other’s opinions is not limited to those who are known to the individual, as *seken* also includes the critical but unknowable public and can even be internalised to include parameters of self-criticism (Martinez *ibid*). As a social discourse, *seken* functions to convey the appropriate cultural norms and values that operate to regulate social behaviour, and insinuates how the appropriate social relations are maintained (Kurihara 2007). By moving to the UK, my interlocutors have intentionally extricated themselves from the native Japanese social restraints and the limitations on personal agency that are implied by these standards for the social self.

However, by committing themselves to a life outside of Japan, the women I interviewed were aware that they were not just removing themselves from the essential networks that constitute a Japanese social life, they were also aware that they would be operating on the borderline of both British and Japanese societies. This same attribute would also apply to any children born of a mixed-race union, whereby

these children are identified as 'half-chan' in Japan. 'Half-chan' is used by fawning strangers as an oblique term of endearment in that its usage acknowledges the fact that these children will never truly be considered Japanese. Although they have moved to Britain and have seemingly placed themselves outside of the field of Japanese social relations, the women I spoke to are all participants in Japanese friendship groups with other Japanese women in their respective British communities. As Plath suggests, it may be very difficult for these women to feel properly 'human' unless they can experience some component of *seken* which stresses the importance of others as "a jury who evaluate and confirm the course of your becoming and being" (ibid:10). There are other approaches that my interlocutors have employed in order to continue participating within Japanese social fields despite their transnational status. I argue that the use of media texts and technologies work in order to temper the dissonance of the experience of becoming a transnational Japanese woman and this is most explicitly played out through the internet use that is described in Chapters Six and Seven.

By focussing on the institutional processes of power, Foucault makes note of the domains of strategies of power, which lie outside of the normative programme (1980). These strategies are artificial, spontaneous, improvisational but more importantly they lie outside of discursive reality and as such can be seen to encourage imaginative reconstructions of everyday life (ibid:251). Therefore the strategies that my interlocutors have engaged with to extricate themselves from their native social environment are the results of the normative discourses that are specific to Japan as a place of origin. One particular attribute that can be suggested here is that the experience of growing up within a social environment where the orientation of *seken* is a factor has worked to shape a particular kind of social practice. This in turn may have predisposed these women to better implicate themselves within the fabric of the British community that they wanted to experience and examples of this within the terms of media use can be seen throughout the subsequent chapters, especially with regard to their engagement with their respective communities in Chapter Eight as they sought to raise funds for the earthquake disaster relief. The women I interviewed have negotiated their media practice with others throughout their lives to date within their social networks in ways that can be said to reflect embedded social relationships. Thus media practice becomes a conduit for social practice and the negotiation of

social discourse. Media practice represents a symbiosis of networks and performance if the implications of *seken* and gender à la Butler are taken into account, as well as a nexus of embedded social practice and social discourse.

1.6 The Diasporic Experience

As it is the processes of self-making that are examined in my research, then it is necessary to take into account the unprecedented rate of social change that is a feature of modern life, especially within an urban setting. As a diasporic group, Japanese women in the UK are in a socially ambiguous position. They are neither political nor economic refugees and as such these women may be said to be operating on the borderline of both British and Japanese societies. Within Japanese society this ambiguity is acknowledged as undesirable and negative because the acquisition of foreign traits by native Japanese is seen as diluting the inherent traits that identify one as being Japanese (Nakane *ibid*, Valentine 1990, White 1992). The traumatic personal and social consequences of those who return to Japan after time away has been recognized as being so extreme that it has become a national social issue (White *ibid*). Valentine (*ibid*) also acknowledges that long-term contact with foreigners results in a marginalized status but he does not address how such status inequalities may be differentiated amongst a gender that he notes is marginal to begin with. Is it possible to gain an understanding of why a relocation to the UK that could result in potential marginal status back home in the native environment might be worth the personal risk? There must be enough potential for self-fulfilment to justify the compromise between the Japanese emphasis on belonging (cf. Lebra 1976) with their potentially marginalised lives in both the UK and Japan. Despite the possibility of coping with a change in social status back in Japan, none of the participants pursued a change in national status; they all maintained Japanese passports and this action reflected their position as Japanese citizens in an official as well as cultural capacity. In order to provide a broad political consideration to the initial question, this section will briefly examine the Japanese discourse of cultural nationalism known as *nihonjinron*, and then contrast this principle with the diasporic will to become a transnational Japanese woman.

Yoshino (1992) offers a thorough analysis of the intellectual basis and social implications of *nihonjinron* (“discussions of the Japanese”) in Japan and this discussion will only touch upon the key points that are of interest to this thesis. He argues that cultural nationalism is about regenerating the national community by creating, preserving or strengthening a people’s cultural identity when it is felt to be lacking, inadequate or threatened. Cultural nationalism is concerned with the distinctiveness of the cultural community as the essence of the nation. In Japan’s case, Yoshino identifies the intellectuals or thinking elites as the source of ideas about the nation’s cultural identity and the intelligentsia who respond to these ideas and connect them to their own social, economic or political interests and activities (ibid: 39). The potent concept of a single and homogenous Japanese people (*minzoku*) has been instrumental in ushering a renovated brand of people’s nationalism that moved from notions of a biological race to a culturally informed ethnic identity (McVeigh 2004). This principle has two main assumptions: the Japanese state was formed only by the Japanese ethnos which has the same culture and language, and only the Japanese ethnos (which has a single and pure blood line) has, from ancient times, lived on the Japanese archipelago (McVeigh ibid). What is most relevant here is how this particular form of racist ideology is so strongly tied to cultural definitions.

The *nihonjinron* phenomenon that developed as a particular mode of thought in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s, may be given consideration through several perspectives. One is to see the central concern of the *nihonjinron* as an attempt to come to terms with significant changes that have affected post war Japanese society. This includes the point of view that sees *nihonjinron* as a rescuer of Japanese identity threatened by Westernisation and as an explanation that regards the *nihonjinron* as giving a cultural explanation to Japan’s economic success. The second justification depicts *nihonjinron* as an ideology and explains its development as a concern of the ruling social class (Yoshino 1999:185). It is possible to view this phenomenon as having risen to revive a Japanese cultural identity, threatened by Westernisation, as a benign activity initiated to restore a sense of public identity after the devastation suffered by the nation during the war. Yoshino notes that what started as a “well intentioned activity to facilitate international understanding thus often had the unintended and ironic consequence of obstructing communication by sensitising the Japanese excessively to their distinctiveness” (ibid: 38). Yoshino further states that this brand

of nationalism does not just consist of the production and one-sided transmission of ideology from above, but equally includes the ongoing consumption and reproduction of culture in which most sections of society are able to participate in (1999). It operates within a duality, consisting of both the formal, state supervised processes and the less formal market oriented processes of cultural reproduction and consumption. From this position, it is possible to infer that one “ironic consequence” of the *nihonjinron* discourse is the positioning of Japanese culture as a consumerist society with specific cultural needs that are unique to the nation and its inhabitants. My interlocutors often referred to their specialist consumer needs as Japanese women and this was not limited to their preference or desire for Japanese media texts but also extended to general social requirements for home and family.

The diasporic experience of the Japanese certainly echoes with that of other communities who have left their own bounded social groups and this experience is characterized by movements, transformation and relocation (Gilroy 1993). As with other populations in flux, there is a strong role for the perceived maintenance of tradition as a potent venue for change in the form of a ‘changing sameness’ that characterizes the diasporic experience through the unavoidable fusion and influx of new ideas (ibid: xi). The distinctive circumstances of the diaspora, that of a self in flux between the local and the global (Gillespie 1995), require that the specific historical and social contexts which bring about the relocation of communities, families and individuals must be taken into account. This premise includes the assumption that the diaspora is capable of influence and change through mediated experiences both locally and globally and this is extensively reinforced throughout the research literature whenever the analytic gaze is turned towards the mediated.

There are several notable examples of ethnographic studies of media that have all been characterised by an investigative flexibility, sensitivity to political and economic forces and subject position. These ethnographies illustrate, for example, how media technologies are put to use by the diaspora to validate identity through television broadcast by Iranians in exile (Naficy 1993), instigate a revolution in Iran whose global repercussions are still being felt thirty five years later (Sreberny and Mohammadi 1994), translate and transform local identities among young Punjabi Londoners (Gillespie 1995) and express national identity and maintain relationships

back home in Trinidad (Miller and Slater 2000). Each of these media ethnographies indicates how the self becomes a reflexively organised enterprise by engaging with, and responding to, new forms of mediated experience. My own research adds to this cannon by considering how the media can be seen to be a compelling force that works in conjunction with migration to influence the work of the imagination in order to re-invent and re-define particular subjectivities. This in turn can be contrasted with the approach to media taken by Abu-lughod (2005), who focuses on the role of television in the production of a national Egyptian culture. Despite the range of approaches taken to anthropological studies of media, it is essential that the ethnographer builds upon the historical and social perspective of the interlocutors and I accomplish this through the use of media narratives.

Although the Japanese have a different history of overseas migration from the ethnographic accounts listed above, there are parallels in the dynamics of immigrant movement as iterated by Gilroy (1993) and this should theoretically reflect in the way that media forms are used by the women of this study. By focussing on Japan as a geographical starting point it becomes obvious that beginning with the redevelopment of Japan in the second half of the twentieth century there has been a Japanese presence in the world that has contributed to the movement of ideas, technologies and products which cross boundaries of space and time and are capable of influencing both local and global ideas and practice (cf. Iwabuchi 2004). The need for this re-alignment of cultural understanding with respect to Japanese transnationals is a consequence of Japan's economic success in the global arena that has created a level of financial privilege that has enabled Japanese women to command a wide range of cosmopolitan experiences such as international travel or conducting professional lives abroad (Kelsky 2001, Silverberg 2007). In this way the cosmopolitan Japanese woman is linked to flows of transnational capital and opportunity that seem to have been partially enabled through global media flows.

Japanese women in their native country are generally considered to lack the agency of globalisation and are rarely seen as cosmopolitans in their own right but instead as the wives or daughters of cosmopolitan men (Sakai 2000). However, this perspective must be questioned as there was a notable boom in the numbers of young Japanese women travelling abroad in the 1980s and 1990s (Liddle and Nakajima 2000). By the

early 1990s almost 80 percent of Japanese students studying abroad were women (Kelsky 2001:2). It is worth indicating that some researchers have argued that the Japanese are not particularly inclined to expressions of cosmopolitanism (Befu et al. 2003) and the lengths to which the expatriate community go to in order to recreate their culture abroad is held as an example of their reluctance to participate in this global discourse. But there is much more to the cosmopolitan expat experience than a perceived glass bubble experience, and a gendered nuance makes this clear. Martin (ibid) notes that the middle class educated women in her study were enthusiastic about their overseas experience before and after the event as it represented a personal opportunity for themselves and their children to experience a different way of life. These women can be said to embody the split between state-imposed identity and personal identity, forged through the fluidity of national boundaries, imagination and personal agency.

The prescience of McLuhan (1964) alluded to this when he implied that the technological extension of ourselves through mediated forms requires us all to participate with each other on a global scale. This implies that cosmopolitanism as a fundamental human value is not just a Western privilege and this has certainly been the case with the women of this study, whose implementation of their own “flexible citizenship” (Ong 1999) reflects specific social practices that are rooted in specific structures of meaning about family, gender, nationality, class mobility and social power and are indicative of is arguably a trend towards a very distinctive twenty-first century social awareness.

This perspective stems from modern developments of migration and communication that appear to have disturbed the seemingly settled nature of populations (cf. Hannerz 1992, Ginsburg et al. 2002). These emerging communities consist of individuals who may be seen as a new class of people with decontextualised cultural capital who can move such capital freely between different settings and whose sense of self is constituted through intense cultural negotiation and includes the emergence of what Hall (1988) identifies as “new ethnicities”. However, due to the negative connotations and the ideological contestation associated with the term ‘ethnic’, I believe that the essence of what Hall is trying to describe can legitimately be thought of as new ways of being a person in modernity. One way of relocating this ‘new way of being’ that I

believe has greater resonance in this context is in the discourse of cosmopolitanism (Appiah 2006), a term which broadly describes the oneness of humanity, a search for the ideals of commitments and loyalties towards local multiculturalisms that transcend the boundaries of the nation-state (Robbins 1998), and is not restricted to a particular class or profession. The desire of the modern cosmopolitan to orient themselves to non-native structures of meaning may be indicative of a personal drive towards greater cultural competence in the non-native setting (Hannerz 1992). This is not to be confused with an attempt at becoming local, but rather a way of simulating local knowledge.

1.7 Conclusion

This thesis serves as an exploration into the role of media practice within the ongoing construction and reconstruction of social spaces and social relations (Morley 2000). The Japanese women I interviewed provided media biographies that indicate how these practices involve the processes of agency which in turn are informed by the resources of the social world. This is an observation that has been built on the processes of contemporary globalisation, which has brought with it very distinct shifts in the concept of personal agency (Eisenstadt 2000). These modifications to personal awareness were perhaps first acknowledged in non-Western society by Lerner (Lerner and Pevsner 1958) who saw it as a characteristic emerging from the newly modernised Turkish community he was observing. His interlocutors were able to recognise new roles for themselves beyond the local and the familial. This is not, however, to imply a desire to return to an unmediated and transparent notion of the subject as the sole author of social practice. What Hall (1996a) suggests, in agreement with Foucault (1970), is that a theory of discursive practice is what is needed, rather than a theory of the knowing subject, and this seems especially appropriate for the transnational subject. A reorientation towards the transnational subject connects the processes of self-making to place and emphasises the plurality and temporality of self-making (Haber 1994). The attempt to articulate the relationship between Japanese women here in the UK and their media practice is to address how the subjectification to discursive practice is in fact a part of the process of identification.

As Williams (1976) observed, the concept of the image as a predominately mental reference or a way of seeing something that is not plainly visible has been developed to include the basic units of composition in visual media. A straightforward interpretation of this remark is that the perception of mediated product as an imagined reproduction would inherently restrict its function as a communicative device between the producers and the audience as two separate and independent entities. But this is not the case if we consider media as something that instigates new meanings and social practices for all participants. Walkerdine was one of the first media researchers to address the issue of the subjectivity of the viewer as interpreter in audience studies, however, it is now clear that anthropology has moved on from that perspective given the dependence on interactivity that modern media requires for meaningful and long-term engagement (in Curran, Morley et al 1996).

Throughout this thesis, I indicate how users of today's technologies are no longer seen as merely interpreters or readers or consumers, but have moved on to become active architects of their own media landscape and social lives. But if gender and nationalism are inherently linked as Mankekar (1993) argues, how is this linking exhibited by the women I have interviewed so far? It may be better to think of the processes of making a home as one of the links between nationalism and gender for the Japanese women of this study. This reflects a sense of identification that is based not only on the solid recognition and enactment of their nationality as Japanese and their gender but also their placement in the UK as British residents, one that requires a fluid negotiation of history, language and culture as part of the process of becoming (Castells 2001; Lebra 2004).

Chapter Two: The Methodology and Fieldwork

2.1 Introduction

This research project was designed in order to incorporate a methodical ethnographic practice to map out the uses of media texts, practices and the associated technologies for a particular group of social subjects in a particular cultural context. The analytical challenge thus becomes how to uncover the data that will allow the ethnographer to effectively examine the rapidity and complexity of potential social change in the media environment. To accomplish this, it was necessary to modify the terms of engagement than that normally offered by older anthropological perspectives (Sreberny 1994). The aim was to establish or design a methodology that would identify and incorporate multiple field sites and thus give validation to potentially new perspectives of what constitutes a viable anthropological study of media practice.

Along with fieldwork, the implementation of participant observation has been the bedrock of academically sanctioned anthropology as established in the UK by Malinowski (1922) in the first half of the twentieth century. To conduct participant observation is to establish relationships of familiarity and varying degrees of intimacy among a group, or in this case, groups, of strangers over time. The experience is not just a physical placement but requires that the anthropologist make use of all her personal resources in order to acquire the experience necessary to produce a new kind of knowledge (Halstead 2008). The experiences and conversations shared between the anthropologist and her interlocutors become an embodied form of knowing (ibid). As noted by Okely, “the anthropologist is the embodied participant observer, researcher, scribe, analyst then author” and this observation indicates how the experience of fieldwork is part of the formation of an ethnographer self (2012:5). By reflecting on the record of the personal experience of fieldwork, the ethnographer can more easily clarify for herself the messy tangle of personal experience and professionalism that combine to imbue the resulting account with anthropological authority and a sound empirical basis.

My fieldwork scenario had been originally designed for a self-selecting group of about 20 Japanese women in total who would reside in London, Manchester and

Edinburgh.⁶ I had hoped that the potential participants would find something relevant to them in my proposal to conduct a long-term investigation into their thoughts, reflections and experiences with media technologies and texts both in the UK and in Japan. I was prepared for the cultural and personal factors that might make participation in this project seem unappealing for the majority of Japanese women and I was fortunate enough to be able to introduce my project to Japanese female friends in Manchester and Edinburgh who had previously offered to canvass their own friends and acquaintances for participation in this study. I was put in touch with the Japanese Saturday School in Lymm, Cheshire, through this connection with a casual acquaintance. My good friend Wakako in Edinburgh was enthusiastic and extremely supportive of this study and it was through her dedication to the project that I was able to count on the long-term commitment of the participants in this city.

As I was going to be introducing the project to a group of parents at the Lymm site who had been approached previously for research assistance from students at Manchester University, my contact and gatekeeper to potential interviewees (Hirsch 1972) suggested that I deliver a short spoken introduction in English in order to clarify what I was hoping to achieve from their participation. I also incorporated an introductory letter that I was able to distribute before my introduction and this was also used to introduce the project to the women in Edinburgh (Appendix A). By the end of the formal research period, I had recorded thirty hours of interviews and written notes from the equivalent as I always followed the loosely structured taped interviews with the same amount of time “off-mic” as a way of establishing a less formal intimacy with my participants. In London I was able to work more closely with my interlocutors within the parameters of participant observation.

The data that is presented in this thesis was gathered from November 2009 until September 2011. The interviews and discussions which took place with my Japanese interlocutors were always on a one-to-one basis unless it was a group interview with the women in Edinburgh. However I must clarify here that the discussions with the

⁶ This initial figure had been reached by what I felt I could logistically cope with during the research period. In the end I was only able to find nine individuals who were willing to commit to the long-range time frame I had planned for. I was, however, able to work the smaller number of participants to my advantage by cultivating a more intimate friendship with these women than I had anticipated. See section 2.4 for additional details.

London participants were held as part of the processes of participant observation, for example, if we were just strolling and chatting, then the conversation would be noted at home after the event. If we stopped for coffee and it was agreed that an interview would take place, I would record our conversation. The interviews in the Manchester area were always conducted by prior arrangement and were recorded over the course of lunch or a coffee. The Edinburgh group interviews were always casual by design – it was my intention that these were to be get-togethers between friends (and I am including myself here) rather than as formal focus group interviews. This was how I sought to embody Rosaldo’s description of participant observation as “deep hanging out”, which struck me as the ideal frame of mind and environment in which to gather the kind of data I was after.⁷ By the end of the fieldwork period I had completed five visits to Edinburgh and five visits each with the participants in the Manchester area. My association with the London participants is more difficult to quantify in this way as our interactions were on a much more regular basis.

I based the use of self-completing questionnaires, and the kinds of questions asked, on Gillespie’s seminal work into media and identity in *Television, Ethnicity and Cultural Change* (1995). Her work was influential in shaping the kind of data that I set out to compile. In fact it was precisely because Gillespie worked with Punjabi teens in Southall that I realised that media narratives would be crucial in understanding the ramifications of living in a mediated society. I extended her approach to ‘TV talk’⁸ so I could encompass all forms of media and in order to understand the role of media in the life of the individual. My thinking about self and self-expression was also guided by Miller and Slater’s work *The Internet: An Ethnographic Approach* (2000). It was this volume that indicated to me that media use, and not just the internet, could be regarded as a viable site for the expression of a nuanced social self. The challenge, then, was to discover how this social self responded to media experiences that were at once personal yet public. In order to compile the data I needed to form a holistic concept of my interviewees’ media use, I began by introducing a brief series of questionnaires (Appendices B and D) that were devised to initiate the research process

⁷ This is a comment credited to Renato Rosaldo at the “Anthropology and ‘the Field’” conference on April 18, 1994. Cited in both Clifford (1997) and Abu-Lughod (1999).

⁸ Gillespie uses the phrase ‘TV talk’ to refer to “the embedding of TV experiences in conversational forms and flows” (23). She argues that TV talk can become a potential object of study when combined with ethnographic methods.

with the women in Edinburgh and the Manchester area. These questions were intended to shape the nature of the research in the longer term and I feel that this is what was achieved through their introduction early in the research period. Bryman's *Social Research Methods* (2004) was instrumental in helping to give form to the questionnaires I designed and to appreciate the potential outcomes. I also used his guidance when planning the structured and unstructured interviews that were instigated by the results of the questionnaires.

The first set of questions went out to the Japanese mums from the Lymm Japanese Saturday School in November 2009. Out of an initial fifteen, twelve were returned. I included stamped self-addressed envelopes for convenience as these were distributed in person.⁹ The same questionnaire was sent to seven women in Edinburgh in December 2009 and only five managed to return completed forms. The second set of questions (Appendix C) went out to the twelve Lymm School mums who had completed the first set. I received six in return. The final and more complex set of questions (Appendix E) was sent in January 2010 and with only two returns I was able to begin the more intensive and long-term interview process in March 2010 with these participants. This was different to the Edinburgh participants, as there were two women (from the initial seven) who had agreed to participate initially yet I was aware at the time that I would be unable to follow up their participation with personal interviews. One was resident in Sterling and a second woman had returned to Tokyo to cope with a long-term health issue. Nonetheless I continued with the second set of questions (Appendix C modified for Edinburgh) and received four in return. The final questions (Appendix E) went out to the Edinburgh participants in January 2010 but with only three returns I found it more practical to revisit these questions when conducting the interview phase of the research.

Throughout the course of my fieldwork practice I adhered to the SOAS code of practice guidelines for ethical research practice and I made sure to obtain written consent from the interlocutors using the university-approved form (Appendix F). This necessitated that protecting the physical, social and psychological well-being of my

⁹ All subsequent questionnaires were sent out via email for the convenience of the participants, yet I was still confounded by diminishing returns. While these numbers were statistically invalid, I found them to be a rich source of analytically useful detail regarding the role of media in the family home.

participants and respecting their rights, interests, sensitivities and privacy remained of utmost importance during the course of my research. I was able to explain the purpose of my study and any anticipated outcomes or research benefits were regularly touched upon. I offered anonymity to each participant but only one interviewee was keen to use a pseudonym. I was aware of the need to uphold the standing of my discipline while out in the field and I conducted myself accordingly by maintaining personal, professional and scholarly integrity.

2.2 Using Narrative

The long-range time frame of this research project meant that I was able to trace the subtle and not so subtle changes in media usage by my participants. I was able to include the sudden but not unsurprising changes to media use undertaken by the interviewees in the wake of the Tohoku disaster of 11 March 2011. The key methodology of this research that served to relate these changes and to link technologies for the self *to* the self is the use of narrative. Within the parameters of a project of this nature, the subject must be given the opportunity to give shape, contour and meaning to the narrative that is being claimed. If I am to follow Foucault's valorising of the subject position then it is essential to this approach that the subject be given the opportunity to disclose the meaning that he or she gives to his/her experiences (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). It is therefore disingenuous and inaccurate to regard the narrative form as fiction as Ree does (1990). However Ree also posits that narratives provided by the subject at any given time are particular to that moment and place and I am in agreement with this assessment (ibid).

The media biographies that the Japanese women of this study shared with me were especially meaningful because of the time and place these interviews were situated. There is a conviction that the truth can be arrived at through the self-examination of one's thoughts and therefore the telling, or in Foucault's case, the confession, of those truths must be delivered if the subject is to arrive at the truth about his/herself (1988). I asked that my interlocutors become "self-narrating beings" (Butler 2005:11). This entailed that they speak of a particular truth at a particular time and place, a performative gesture that required my interviewees to elaborate and position and sequence the telling as individuals and as subjects (Butler ibid). In this manner the individual expresses his/her individuality and "imposes a law of truth on him which

he must recognise and which others have to recognise in him” (Dreyfus and Rabinow *ibid*:212). This action has the consequence of tying the narrator to their identity through this process of self knowledge (Foucault 1980) and also serves to codify the biographical details of the participants within an academic discourse (Rose 1989). It would be remiss to not mention the issue of narrative as one of a power imbalance between the interviewer over the speaking subject but this perspective would only serve to diminish the supremacy of the personal relationships that I shared with my interviewees, many of which continue to this day. Ultimately, too, such a perspective would not accurately reflect the fact that it was myself as researcher who was ultimately at the mercy of my interlocutors, given that they had the final say as to whether or not to participate in any given interview.

In their assessment of the political in the works of Franz Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari argue that the representative potential of collective enunciations is politically suffused in a manner that produces an “active solidarity”. Despite this thesis being an ethnographic and social account of media practice, this literary analogy seems particularly appropriate. I suggest that the same authority to effect a collective representation is applicable to this compilation of media biographies by individual Japanese women:

There are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that could be separated from a collective enunciation that would belong to this or that “master” and that could be separated from a collective enunciation. ...what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren’t in agreement....But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is often inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down, literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, even revolutionary, enunciation. (1986:17)

The necessarily political element of narrative as representation must be understood as neither “imaginary nor symbolic” if the narrative is to maintain ethnographic legitimacy (*ibid*:16). As Stuart Hall argues, the self is constituted through practices of self-production as outlined by Foucault which acknowledges the how the ethics and the practices of self are part of the ‘aesthetic of existence’. This involves a “deliberate

stylisation of daily life; and its technologies are most effectively demonstrated in the practices of self production, in specific modes of conduct, in what we have come from later work to recognise as a kind of *performativity*” (1996:13[original emphasis]). The propensity for the subject to continually refine the constitutive self is a quality that emerges from the use of narrative as a research tool.

Through the use of narrative, I am placing my interlocutors in a position that highlights their subjectivity as individuals rather than objects of history (Harstock 1990). This is to provide an understanding of how the adult self may be constituted by the child that is in turn placed contextually in specific historical and social situations which consist of domestically located power and influence. The historical perspective that this method provides is essential in order to construct a holistic perspective of the subjectivities under scrutiny in this thesis. This approach is in agreement with Morley (2000) in that such process must be understood as being grounded in the micro processes that begin in the domestic sphere, in this case the use of media in the home. What is interesting to note is how these occurrences of media practice seem to incur an intrusion of the strange, or the other, into the safe and familiar domestic space via broadcast television. By receiving the strange within the context of the home implies a tacit acceptance and approval of this intrusion. This breach may have opened up an inner appreciation or a latent desire for embracing ‘the other’ – literally and figuratively as will be seen in the following chapters.

Despite my initial reluctance to use questionnaires as the initial means of introducing my research to potential participants at the Lymm site (I had hoped to start with brief, more personal, conversations with those interested), the insights gleaned via these questionnaires led to the deepening research into the narratives of early media use of the interlocutors. However it was clear from the outset that the answers that derived from the questionnaires would be closed in nature, with no opportunity for any thoughtful expansion of the replies given. It was only when I was able to review similar questions and the answers derived in a face-to-face environment that the importance of their narratives became apparent. For example, the problem of the discrepancy between what is said via questionnaires and what is done in the home became apparent in one participant’s case, whereby according to her questionnaire her only use of the internet was to read and compose emails, and to use Skype for calls to

family members back in Japan. However, when we discussed internet use within the context of the group interview, she admitted that she enjoyed watching Japanese dramas online. It is clear that there was an inconsistency between perhaps what this participant felt was an appropriate answer to the questionnaire and a response more representative of lived practices when discussing the topic in a relaxed setting. This discrepancy and that of the problem of diminishing returns are evidence of the well-known shortcomings (among many others) of relying on questionnaires for social research purposes (Bryman 2004:134).

It is of course difficult to distinguish between what people say and what they do (Gillespie 1995) so it is essential that I stress that what is important to this research is to understand what the women believe they are doing at home via their media practice, and why they are doing it. With this in mind, there is a case to be made for prioritising the use of narrative in that the nature of narrative is organic (Rapport 1998). The narrative form is useful for mobilising the imagined self into a reified form that is communicable, serviceable and above all, personal to the individual. As Gilroy notes, this alliance or identification with specific cultural forms gives a coherent, experiential sense of the self that can reflect upon and communicate its presence and place in the social world (1993). It may seem that a so-called “authenticity” is difficult to pin down under these circumstances, but I would argue that a concept of a quantifiable authenticity is a hazy prospect at best given that “authenticity” is an attribute based on the internal understanding of the consumer or observer. The examples provided by my interviewees indicate that narrative can and does function as a tool that iterates how these women see the use of media practices in their lives at the point of narration. Narrative serves as a reflexive device that allows the researcher to understand the articulations between practice and the self.

In her account of gathering biographical information from Japanese women in their homes, Lebra notes the various interruptions from children, grandchildren and adult family members that she had to endure in order to gather the data she was after (1984). While interruptions of this nature were not an issue given that my interviews were mostly conducted outside the home, I did find that discussions were often eased into with a bit of autobiographical detail about myself depending on the context and this is in agreement with Lebra’s experience (*ibid*). With a non-Western and

specifically Japanese perspective as identified by Plath, the inherent capacity of the Japanese for human relationships makes the narrative a particularly adept format for gathering data from this social group (1980). Rosenberger argues that the Japanese have an abiding sense of responsibility towards themselves and to the social world through complex processes that are specific to Japan (1992, 2013). From this perspective, my interlocutors entered into a mutually accountable and conscientious relationship with me as the seeker of a particular kind of information about them, namely, information about media use in their lives. The demands of this agreement were an additional responsibility for them, requiring that they put aside time and attention from their daily lives in order to fulfil their end of the arrangement.

To this end, my research style while conducting fieldwork seems to resonate with the multi-sited research into adulthood that that Rosenberger conducted in Japan in the mid-1990s (2013). She began interviewing women “with open-ended questions and long conversations about their lives, family, work, friends, entertainments, loves, pressures and dreams for their future”, much as I did (2). I also listened out for what they wanted to tell me, and this would often lead to new avenues of questioning and further discussion. As an anthropologist, I kept myself methodologically and theoretically flexible and allowed myself to follow the voices and ideas of the women I spoke with (Okely 2012). I also had to remind myself that my interlocutors were also compelled to act within my own assumptions about what their media use would actually consist of. Throughout this thesis I tell the stories of my interlocutors in a fashion that employs the words they used when we talked to each other to give a sense of the nature of the everyday conversations we had. As author, I play the role of mediator between them and the audience for whom I write.

2.3 The Issue of Practice and a Reflexive Aside

The question of what constitutes practice has become a current hot topic in media studies (cf. Postill et.al 2010) and despite the simple assumption that practice refers to an embodied set of activities that people perform on a regular basis, there is clearly a need to delineate and problematise how exactly researchers go about theorising media as practice. Rather than trying to force a straightjacket of theoretical specificity onto this particular thesis at this point I will circumvent the argument in favour of a more flexible ‘practice approach’ to describe the theoretical and methodological orientation

I use. The relevant media theory that has been employed to analyse the media practices that were provided by my interlocutors is interwoven throughout the thesis chapters where applicable. Mark Hobart has raised an interesting epistemological consideration (among a host of others) whereby he queries the “relation between the knowledge and understanding of the researchers and the objects of study” (ibid:63). He sets out the premise that any research on media practice should be reflexively sourced as a means of expanding the researcher’s understanding of practice within the social context, otherwise there is a risk of producing work that may be inherently flawed without this particular consideration. This research fulfils Hobart’s particular criteria, based as it is on my own memories of television as a Latina in southern California in the 60s and 70s (as discussed later in this section). Because of this reflexive grounding, I feel that I am in a particularly favourable position to understand the more intricate subjectivities that I explore through media practice in this thesis, and to give voice to the personal narratives I encountered which are essential for creating and buttressing notions of self and selfhood.

So what is practice theory and how do we recognise it? There appears to be no definitive answer to this question, but this flexibility may be a best fit for the needs of anthropology as a basis for approaching an understanding of the interrelatedness between “media practices and cultural frames of reference” (Askew and Wilk 2002:10). Helle-Valle suggests that practice theory can provide a different foundation for explaining the regularity and order within the various realms of social life (2010:192). This may be the case generally, but in the case of the women I interviewed, practice provides a foundation for a somewhat irregular means of being Japanese. These women are of course Japanese by birth, but by virtue of having moved out of their birth country they can be seen to be more cosmopolitan in thought and practice (as performance). The contextually shaped nature of their social actions can be seen to be driven by Japanese social practices. In her seminal article published in 1984, Ortner offered a suggestion that “what a practice theory seeks to explain, then, is the genesis, reproduction, and change of form and meaning of a given social/cultural whole, defined in more or less this sense” (149). She adds that a study of “practice is the study of all forms of human action...but from a particular - political - angle” (ibid). One element that can be said to link the political angle with the form of practice is the element of space. Bourdieu applied the concept of *habitus* as he

sought to explain the underlying determinants of the practices that are available to different individuals in a society (1984). *Habitus* functions as a social space that produces the strategies and dispositions necessary for a person's everyday life (ibid). By taking into account the relevance of home as *uchi* for my interlocutors I endeavour to address the "question of understanding social change and cultural transformation as situated within interconnected spaces" (Gupta and Ferguson 1992:8).

Couldry states that by looking at practice as a new research paradigm it is possible to "sidestep the insoluble problem of proving media effect" but I believe that there is more to this observation (2010:37). The focus on practice will also serve to reframe the issue of media effect into something workable, that is, a discourse that shifts attention from an unknowable and amorphous audience onto social actors and how they find meaning and fulfilment within the context of the social self. The methodological framework was designed with the intention to understand, and more importantly, to emphasise, what it was that my interlocutors thought about media and what they thought they were doing with regards to their media use. As my research indicates, media practice in itself is just as fluid and adaptable as the individual's sense of self is and this is exemplified by the changes to individual media use that were enacted as a result of the Tohoku Earthquake in March 2011.

As part of the self-reflexive process, I am again addressing the focus on gender in this research. Japanese womanhood is often the focus of ethnographic study because of the separateness of the gendered social spaces in Japanese society and this has been acknowledged from the earliest anthropological accounts to the most recent studies (cf. Benedict 1954, Hamabata 1990, Kurotani 2005, Rosenberger 2013). One feature of the explicitness of Japanese gender expectations is the seemingly narrow range of life choices for both genders in that such choices are often guided by what is socially determined, with the result being that women are expected to be fulfilled by focusing their energies into the roles of wife and mother.¹⁰ As a mother of three children myself, this life focus is a facet of everyday life that I understand and appreciate.

¹⁰ As this thesis indicates, Japanese women are not bound exclusively to these subject positions and indeed have participated in a wide range of lived experiences and resistance than is often implied by the some of the existing literature (see, for example, Allison 1994, Kondo 1990, Rosenberger 2013).

However, I must also clarify my own subjectivity or this study may become misconstrued as an example of anthropology at home. I am a mature student and an American national who has lived in the UK for twenty-five years as of this writing. I was raised in a working class, bilingual Mexican American home in Southern California and my own personal relationship with television and popular culture has profoundly influenced my views on the relevance and importance of media. As a child, I found that sharing the common ground of popular American television programmes in the 1970s such as *The Partridge Family* (1970-1974) and *The Brady Bunch* (1969-1974) opened channels of communication and friendship with my non-Latino classmates. The ability to negotiate between social environments through the forum of popular culture was a life lesson that stayed with me and became my research focus as a mature student. Forging an ability to share in a mutually understandable world of mediated experiences enabled me to confidently participate in the milieu of both the culture at home and the wider community around me. The willingness and ability to negotiate multiple cultures is reflected in Abu-Lughod's discourse of "'halfies' – people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education or parentage" and as such are in a unique position to unsettle the boundary between self and other (1999: 153). I believe that the reasons outlined above indicate how and why I have designed this particular research project and why I am uniquely positioned to conduct it as a 'halfie' living in the UK.

As a researcher with a different set of life experiences I feel that I am more aware of the intricate and complex dynamics of the domestic sphere, in a way that perhaps my younger colleagues might be less willing to acknowledge or accommodate. I recognise that the 'practices' which are imagined and instituted will ultimately have implications for the self within the context of the world outside because I have witnessed such articulations take place all around me, not just on a personal individual level but amongst friends and family. To this end, I approach the formation of self as a constant process that takes place throughout life and I explore media use as part of the process of self determination and choice. And just as Foucault was invoked in the beginning of this introduction, his observations are key to summing up some reflections here as well, in that "Foucault's thesis...encourages imaginative recreations of everyday life along lines that are in keeping with the poststructural insight that subjectivity and intentionality are not prior to, but functions of forms of

life... (Haber 1994:78). I would also like to link a second observation to this, as Foucault reminds us that these “imaginative recreations” are ultimately subject to permutations of an inescapable and integral power, yet this manifestation of power not merely repressive, it is also productive and needs to be evaluated under a more positive prism, as a productive network which runs through the whole social body much more than a negative insistence that only finds purpose within a function that is repressive (1980:119).

2.4 Reimagining the Field Site

I began my first fieldwork trip in November 2009 by going up to the Japanese Saturday School at Lymm High School in the Manchester area to begin participant observation and to distribute what I had hoped would be the first of many successful questionnaires. My Japanese neighbour and friend Mariko, who had agreed not only to participate in the project but also to act as my translator and general assistant on this trip, and I set off at 6:30 am from our local overground train station in South East London and changed at London Bridge for the underground Northern Line to Euston; however, due to a broken train in front of ours we were severely delayed from the outset. By the time we arrived at Euston we had missed our train, booked onto the next one and informed H, my contact and Saturday Japanese School Principal at Lymm High School (the working site of the Saturday Japanese School) in Cheshire that we would be a bit late. However, due to a combination of poor coordination and communication by Virgin Trains, and ongoing line upgrade works at our connecting station we actually arrived at Warrington Bank Quay station at 13:00, a very far cry from our planned original arrival time of 9:15 am. This first trip up to the Manchester area was a transport disaster and the experience served as my induction into the challenges of conducting fieldwork outside the clean and meticulous planning I had prepared on paper. It was clear within the first thirty minutes of the start of my first fieldwork experience that there would be a discrepancy between how the study was planned and how the study would actually be conducted. This was also my introduction to the unpredictability of fieldwork in general and of the methodological flexibility this particular multi sited project would require.

In the end the project got under way with a core group of two women from the Manchester area (Yumi aged 41 and Yumiko aged 44), four women in Edinburgh

(Wakako aged 53, Kimiko aged 45, Kazuko aged 46 and Eiko aged 36) and three women in London (Mariko aged 43, Chika aged 48 and Asan aged 51), a smaller number than what I had hoped for but I was pleased that those women who did volunteer their time had a clear understanding of what I was hoping to achieve from this intrusion into their personal lives. Reassuringly, all of the participants were keen to be considered as part of the discussion group and some apologised for their lack of reply to the questionnaires due to their busy work and family lives. I found the Edinburgh group to be very generous and thoughtful with their participation in the discussion groups which were considered to be rare opportunities for the women to get together with each other as well as covering my own research agenda. There were a few false starts in my quest for more participants, for example I had hoped that a Japanese language school that is local to me in London and that I had volunteered at in the past would follow through with their initial hazy agreement to distribute my questionnaires to their Japanese students. And when several of my male colleagues in the Japanese language evening class volunteered their wives and partners for the project I was not surprised to find that ultimately the women were far too busy with children or careers to take part.

I was able to collect further contributions from several other women who chose not to participate fully in the study, but were happy to chat with me informally regarding their media use as long as I did not identify them and their voices appear intermittently throughout this thesis. The interviews were conducted in English. I had taken five years of Japanese language training through night time courses in London including one year at SOAS and I had worked my way up to an intermediate level of language ability. After I had introduced myself in Japanese at my first meeting with Yumiko, she leaned forward and said in a loud whisper, “Sylvia san, it would be easier for both of us if we did this in English.” Yumi also dismissed my first introduction in Japanese with a wave of her hand and said “don’t worry about it, English will be fine.” I felt that this attitude acknowledged the recognisable challenge for both the researcher and interlocutors to collect the necessary data in a language that not only would have been a challenge for myself but also for my discussants to interpret what, exactly, I was trying to get at. The other participants, Wakako, Mariko and Chika, knew me as a native English speaker so there was never any question on

their behalf that the interviews would be conducted in English, despite the occasional casual conversations I would have in Japanese with Mariko and Chika.

Moore's (1993) remarks that such an approach to traditional methodology departs from both academic and industry-led research, both of which have failed to deal adequately with the dynamics and diversity of media reception. For example, I found that by incorporating Hiro's suggestion of using questionnaires (despite the issue of decreasing returns with each questionnaire) I was able to draw out the memories and reminisces of a mediated upbringing in Japan from my informants in Edinburgh and Manchester and then discuss these memories directly during interviews in person, and similar details were collected through regular contact with my informants in London. This process indicated that media biographies were essential in order to construct a holistic perspective of the subjectivities under investigation. Clifford (1992) notes that the people studied by anthropologists are rarely homebodies and this study can be considered a reversal of this norm. The Japanese women who participated may not be homebodies in the traditional sense of a housewife (most of them worked outside the home) but they are situated at home in the domestic sphere just as the implementation of the majority of the technologies I document in my research are rooted in the home.

Since my intention was to study a contemporary complex society and the various aspects of life that are entwined with quotidian media practices in three urban areas, I considered the city to be merely the location or the context of the activity under scrutiny, not the focus of the research. The research was multi-sited (Marcus 1995), yet there is a very specific ontological issue when trying to identify the bounded and reified entity that the discipline recognises as "the field" in multi-sited research. What or where exactly is "the field"? As anthropologists began to move into increasingly urban environments in the latter half of the twentieth century (Hannerz 1980) it became essential that the discipline begin to consider the construction, contextualization and expression of new forms of community (see for example Barth 1969, Gellner 1983) as it was becoming apparent that anthropology could no longer assume a bounded and localized grouping which could provide a discrete and tidy fieldwork site. The response to this difficulty was to shift the emphasis from the perceived static and unchanging social groups and institutions of the structural

functionalist perspective onto personal social networks (Amit 2000, Hannerz 1980). As anthropology moves into the twenty first century these imagined difficulties are now embraced by the discipline and this kind of narrow categorisation overcome by establishing a coherent research focus supported by a sound theoretical grounding. What remains of core importance is that the anthropologist experiences a sense of displacement when entering the field.

Despite the renegotiation of the concept of the field site, the experience of doing fieldwork remains the central defining feature of the discipline (Clifford 1997, Gupta and Ferguson 1997, Amit 2000).¹¹ This implies that there is still a need for the physical dislocation on the part of the researcher despite the incorporation of potentially new ethnographic horizons which have been variously identified as multi-sited (Marcus 1995) the global ecumene (Hannerz 1996), or as a discourse of 'scapes' (Appadurai 1996). To this end, my chosen urban field site can be identified as a spatial practice (de Certeau 1984), that is, the field space is not an ontological given, but becomes a social space by and through the people who use it and make it so. These theoretical modifications are of particular relevance to my research, as the changing parameters of what constitutes a social space in the here and now make it possible to conduct a viable ethnographic overview of my participants and their media practices because it allows for habitual media use to be recognised as an embedded daily practice.

2.5 The Interlocutors

The selective and analytical nature of ethnographic writing means that much of the nuanced detail of the complexity of the Japanese women I interviewed and their lives will go unacknowledged. How is it possible to convey Mariko's steely determinism in achieving two separate TJFL¹² qualifications so that she would have a reliable income and form of self-support after her husband left the marital home, or how to capture her visceral anguish on the morning of his departure? How best to describe Asan's cheerful elegance or how she lights up when she talks about her accountant husband? These and so much more besides are elements that define these women and

¹¹ See Schneider (1995) for an opposing view. Schneider argues that anthropology is distinguished by ideas and theoretical innovations rather than fieldwork.

¹² The TJFL is an internationally recognised certification in teaching Japanese as a foreign language.

allow them to be ordinary yet extraordinary. How Yumi would always seem detached from the interview process whereas Yumiko was an enthusiastic interviewee and was keenly knowledgeable of Chester's colourful historical past. Or, for example, Yumi's expression of herself as a Japanese mother as reflected in her decision to speak only in Japanese to her son, yet she was not particularly interested in cooking Japanese dishes. When I asked her about this, she replied, "it's too complicated because you have to prepare, like, seven different things. It's so much easier just to make pasta." This can be compared with Yumi's attempts to recreate Japanese foods as sourced from British grocery items as outlined in one of the blogs that she would regularly visit. Now however she has found this element of recreating Japanese culture in the home is less problematic, "it is so much easier now to get Japanese ingredients. You can get so many different things in Tesco." Or Kimiko's sunny and cheerful disposition, which to me came to be symbolised by the red jacket she wore to the interviews. On our first meeting the coat was brand new and elicited many compliments (red was apparently her key colour) yet by the time of our final interview the coat was looking less bright and new and more worn and weary, and I secretly felt this to be my personal metaphor for the fieldwork process. Kazuko was always more reticent in her demeanour in that she seemed cool and detached, speaking only after considerable thought. That she once complained at length about the rudeness of the speech habits of the younger generation came as no surprise as she seemed to be someone who appreciated tradition and self-control. Yet all of these qualities, and more besides, came to represent the whole person, qualities that stood out above and beyond the core constituent focus of this study. Wakako was serious yet cheerful, with an almost goth-like ethereal quality that belied her approachability. She and her husband had never had children, in part due to the fact that she was already in her early forties when she married, but she was nonetheless almost maternal with me and the others, always letting me know when would be a good time to arrange the interviews, and where the others should sit.

There are some very broad generalizations that can be made about the British working lives of the participants. For a start all of the participants had completed some form of tertiary education. All of the women self-identified as coming from middle class homes in Japan. As Mariko explained to me one day,

Most people in Japan would say they are middle class. There are some housing estates (public housing) but only a few, not as many as here in Britain. They are only for people who are really poor, or for people who have been very, very unlucky and the government gives support to these people.

Yet there seemed to be a wide range of this middle class income bracket as represented by my interviewees, ranging from Asan's father who had been employed by Toshiba Corp. in an executive capacity and Mariko's father who worked as a self-employed painter and decorator and was the sole provider for the family.

Two of the London-based women worked in what can be loosely termed as the Japanese culture market. Mariko and Chika are both freelance Japanese language teachers yet each has carved out a very different kind of teaching practice, with Mariko preferring to work out of her home for the most part and with Chika preferring a more traditional classroom setting. This confirms Befu's observation that the Japanese expatriates are more inclined to pursue employment in areas of cultural familiarity rather than look towards the host culture for work but this only holds true if there is such work to be found (Befu, Guichard-Anguis 2003). The women in the north of the country, however, have mostly chosen to work in the public sector. Wakako was working two part time jobs for the charity sector at the time of interviewing, Kimiko was working as a bookkeeper for Edinburgh Council and Kazuko was not working at the time but had worked previously in administrative support type jobs. Eiko continued to work as a freelance researcher for media organizations in Japan as well as focussing on her artwork in her spare time. Yumi works as a classroom assistant at a local secondary school. Yumiko is at home with two young daughters but she was voluntarily trying to organize a Japanese language nursery and after school club in Chester in order to circumvent the weekly trek to Lymm and to support the local Japanese children's language studies during the holidays.

Through the course of the research two of my informants underwent life changing episodes, yet the passage of time was felt in other ways. Mariko found herself separated from her English husband of 11 years and Chika became engaged to a gentle music-loving Englishman and was married soon after the formal period of

research had been completed. In Edinburgh, Kae, originally the fifth member of the discussion group who had participated in the first interview, fell out of touch and all efforts to establish communication with her came to nothing. Wakako suspected that she had returned to Japan with her toddler son after some marital discord, but this was a best guess scenario as she had not been in touch with anyone and had simply dropped off the radar of this group of friends. Yumi's young son went from honestly believing that his mum could only speak Japanese to an understanding that she was speaking only to *him* in Japanese in order to maintain his language skills. Yumiko's household became one with two toddlers and a single laptop for the family at the start of our interviews together, to a home with smart phones and tablets for herself and her increasingly digital savvy young daughters. The women also remained very much engaged with the research process throughout the interview period, often suggesting YouTube videos that I should watch or making connections between their media habits of the past and those of the present. There was clearly a significant level of self-reflexivity on the part of the interlocutors that became evident in their continued enthusiasm and interest in the project as the period of fieldwork progressed.

2.6 How the Thesis is Organised

The thesis is laid out in such a way that it outlines the interlocutors' life experience with media in a somewhat chronological order yet each of the chapters are imbued with reflections of the social self. There is some discrepancy in the style of the biographical information given for Mariko and Chika. This is because much of their narratives were told to me in bits and pieces through regular and sustained contact which went beyond the allocated period of fieldwork, as opposed to the recordings which I used to gather data in the Manchester area and Edinburgh. As a result, I have reconstructed their narratives using their own words as these details were given to me in piecemeal fashion through participant observation. I have kept this particular style throughout the narratives for all of the interlocutors in Chapter Three for consistency.

Chapter Three focuses on the narratives of arrival into the UK and how this transition signalled the use of television as a technology in and of itself and as a social practice. As the first research question that I had formulated for this project was about television use amongst Japanese women in Britain it was appropriate to begin the ethnography with this topic. Several of the women interviewed used television to

keep themselves informed about popular culture trends through *Top of the Pops* in the eighties and nineties, but all of the women interviewed used either *East Enders* or *Coronation Street* as a way of learning about the social values, traditions, accents and figures of speech in the UK. There was a clear appreciation of the regional subtleties of British life as London residents tuned into *East Enders* and those in the north opting for *Coronation Street* as a preferred representation of British society. Using television in this manner was more pronounced in the first few years of their arrival into Britain.

In Chapter Four I reset the timeline of my interlocutors' narratives in order to consider how a cosmopolitan outlook may have been prompted by media habits experienced as adolescents at home in Japan. I consider whether, and how, it was possible that media events and texts accepted unproblematically into the home may have inspired a desire to know of the world outside of the native country. Of course there is more to this than just media use, and a cosmopolitan mindset should also rightly be attributed to other family practices as discussed in the chapter. The inclusion of this drift towards a cosmopolitan tendency is outlined in terms of the engagement with media which according to my interlocutors seemed to play a pivotal role in allowing the social self to entertain the feasibility of a life outside of Japan. Chapter Five continues with reflections of the will to change and the agency of the social subject with regard to the experiences of Yumi and Asan. This chapter will examine how a particular interest in, and preference for, British popular culture was and is experienced as practice through choices regarding personal style, technology and language.

Having established themselves as British residents, the arrival of the internet signalled the possibility of exploring new forms of sociability. Once they were online, the women expressed a shift in television's position in the domestic sphere as the main source of personal mediated pleasure and meaning in preference to accessing Japanese language material on the net. All the women interviewed used the internet daily with times ranging from one hour to several hours and this is outlined in Chapter Six. Following on from this, the topic of watching Japanese dramas online generated a variety of opinions and strategies. Several of the women felt very enthusiastic about participating in the viewing of dramas and outlined the various websites used to enable viewing regardless of questions of legality. A few women, especially Eiko,

expressed ambivalence towards dramas, and in Chapter Seven I will argue that this also reflects how they position themselves in Japanese society.

Chapters Eight and Nine will examine how the earthquake generated a multitude of local responses from my informants. In many ways these chapters represent the apotheosis of the theoretical and ethnographic material that precedes. This is also the arena that saw the greatest variety of expression of the social self both in a Japanese and British context that is discussed in this section. The post-earthquake nuclear crisis offered a forum that allowed my informants to critically appraise news coverage that originated in both Japan and the UK. Attitudes were varied and of course also hinged on their family's proximity to the disaster and their own decisions on how to best approach a potential visit back home to Japan with small children.

Chapter Ten forms the concluding chapter and contains my own thoughts and reflections on the ethnographic material that precedes. I discuss what I felt went well with the research and what didn't. I also propose how this research could be broadened and extended in the future, and what, if any, implications this may have for the field of Media Anthropology. I am including the questionnaires at the end of the thesis as support material because they were instrumental to the formulation of this project as it stands. Mariko provided the Japanese translations.

2.7 Conclusion

This ethnography is a written account of a significant social interaction between a researcher and a culture, an account that is rooted in an effort to understand the entire tapestry of the changes that I witnessed in the social lives of my participants. The following narratives of how the Japanese diaspora in the UK are participating in their chosen media environments and how they respond to it signifies the strong connection between motion and imagination, the social and the self, and provides an indication of how electronic media works as a compelling force in conjunction with migration to influence the work of the imagination (Hannerz 1996).

Domestic and private lives in modern Britain are becoming increasingly suffused with technology which works to enable information gathering and personal communication within the personal confines of the home (Silverstone and Hirsch 1992). These

technologies have become a central component to the individual and collective lives of family members and have achieved a special niche in the discourse of family household culture in the twenty first century. As a result of this internalised quality of media life it is impossible to tease out media practice in isolation. It is linked to everything, networked, imbricated, overlapping and interweaving all else that takes place in the domestic sphere or with life in general. The women of this study are a generation for whom a television in the home was a given, and were thus well placed to absorb and integrate all the other technological advances that made their way into their homes over the space of time. The Japanese women I spoke to were receptive to forms of new hardware and had no issue with introducing these technologies into the home and integrating them into daily routine practice. What did differ was the place, time, and the information, entertainment and data they elected to consume. These elements were determined through personal needs and desires. The question of a sense Japanese female personal agency which is embedded within social networks and personal ties lies at the heart of this thesis.

As this was a media-based study, the question of multi-sited research was regarded by myself as an issue that could be reworked to my advantage. The approach to my research and my methodology was fuelled by the question of how to collect sound evidence about the mediated social life of Japanese women that can be used to increase our understanding of how they view themselves and their world, and like all the best ethnographic work this in turn will tell us something new about ourselves. Media as a practice rests on the threshold of ambiguity, openness and indeterminacy for both the creators and the audience, but one that ultimately remains recognisable for all concerned. Television as a medium and television viewing as a practice is characterised by its position in the domestic sphere. And the intrinsic nature of the medium and its associated practices has been irrevocably altered with the onset of new technological advances which serve to move its implications beyond the domestic. As Ang notes, these changes such as DVD technology, satellite, cable and pay per view services have rearranged established paradigms of how television operates in culture and society (1996). However, what has remained consistent in studies of media use is the success of ethnographic research sited at the point of reception and social mediation – in most cases, as Morley (1995, 2000) recommends, in the home.

Chapter Three: The Importance of Time, Place and Television

3.1 Introduction

One particular experience that helped to shape this research project originated from an offhand anecdote as told by my first Japanese language teacher.¹ A few years after her arrival in London from Tokyo in the late seventies, the BBC began broadcasting *Tenko*,² a television series that dramatised the experiences of British women held as POW's in a Japanese internment camp during WWII. She remarked that members of the public had spat on her on the street after a particularly harrowing episode of the programme had been broadcast. It must be acknowledged that an incident such as this is deeply rooted within the complex historical and political tensions that have existed between Japan and Britain, especially as depicted by *Tenko*. It should therefore be possible to understand how a provocative broadcast can serve to perpetuate such cultural animosity among individuals who may be so inclined. Our teacher expressed surprise at the inability of the British television viewing public to separate a televised experience from real life encounters. My fellow students were quick to suggest that perhaps this experience was not down to an unsophisticated viewing audience but rather that our teacher had simply been the victim of racist behaviour. The point of this observation lies in my teacher's impression that the local television viewing public could not differentiate between an emotional shared viewing experience and the appropriate behaviour that would normally be expected within the shared space of the urban environment. Nonetheless, this experience, as described by our mature teacher over twenty years after it took place, encapsulates how television viewing has become a defining element in the patterning of human social life, whether this be for the better or for the worse, and how the experiences connected with television can in some part help to shape how we see ourselves and our world.

This ethnography begins with the subject of television because it was the question of television use that initiated this research. In this chapter, television is addressed as a

¹ She was unable to participate further in this project due to her ongoing work commitments, however I felt that it was important to include her anecdote as it was a crucial element in the formulation of my research.

² *Tenko* was co-produced by the BBC and the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Company) and began broadcast in October 1981. It ran for three series, culminating in 1984. Source: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0081944/> Retrieved 28/03/13.

technology for the self in that it aids and abets the expression of a socially embedded self. Television is either watched as part of learning to live in the UK, as part of a family bonding exercise, discouraged as a practice for children, or its presence is rejected altogether. Each of these forms of practice will be addressed in this chapter.

The processes of watching and understanding television must be placed within the overarching framework of the domestic practice of which it is a part. Ang notes that an audience does not just consist of an aggregate of viewers but that these participants should be conceived as engaging in the practice of watching television so that the process of deciphering must be understood as embedded in the general practice of viewing (1996). This observation prefaces what an anthropological study of media recognises, that such quotidian procedures can be deceptively complex when they are part of the everyday communication between people who share a social and cultural space. As my teacher found to her disappointment, the multilayered processes of watching television may serve to distinguish between those who share a particular interpretive understanding of a text and those who do not. Many of my interlocutors prefaced discussions about television with opening phrases such as “I remember when I first got here...” or “I remember I used to watch...” which seems to indicate that television viewing was part of their integrative processes into British society, and as I argue in this chapter, carries with it distinct associations of home, place and national character.

This chapter will provide some biographical details of the interviewees and outline how they came to reside in their respective towns and cities in Britain in order to provide a contextual basis for the analysis of media practice that follows. I am also incorporating how their initial engagement with television, where it was present, came to reinforce their understanding of British character and society as a manifestation of a national archetype. The multiple ways that these women came to employ media once they arrived in the UK is deeply embedded as part of their physical and cultural practice and has become an integral part of the daily routine of domestic life. These practices then may be considered to be core elements of how these Japanese women go about creating and maintaining an agreeable and acceptable home life in a non-native setting and just as importantly highlights one particular form of participating alongside and within British society.

3.2 London: Television and Change

Mariko was thirty years old, six months pregnant and a newlywed when she arrived in London in July 1996. She has said that her ability in spoken English was virtually non-existent despite having studied the language in secondary school. Her husband was sufficiently fluent in Japanese having spent a year attending Hiroshima University as an exchange student as part of his Oxford University course in Japanese, and Mariko recalls that in those early months of her new life in London they mostly spoke Japanese to each other with English use gradually increasing as her confidence and her family grew in the ensuing years of their marriage. She felt that the arrival of her first daughter in the early months of both her marriage and her settlement in London was quite stressful; however, once H was born she felt that her days certainly had a greater sense of purpose, meeting not just the demands of a new infant but also keeping up with the various NHS health care appointments that are imposed on new mothers and their babies.³

Mariko's medical appointments had been difficult due to the language barrier, which left her feeling, more often than not, that she was little more than some exotic specimen to be patronised and patted on the head and then sent back home. As she put it, "it was like I was a little puppy that didn't understand anything they said – I did understand but it was hard for me to answer back then." Her husband accompanied her on as many of these ante- and post-natal appointments as he could but his obvious work commitments meant that quite early on Mariko had to negotiate the ins and outs of her new domestic life for herself. She recalls the kindnesses that she was shown by members of her new community, for example how the fruit and veg lady who ran her stall across from the little Co-op corner shop would slip her a few free apples or a few bananas "for the baby" with her purchases. Apart from these small gestures, Mariko felt quite isolated in her new and strange environment in Greenwich, gradually making friends and acquaintances and feeling more at home in her new community as she visited the park with her young daughters and once the children began attending the local nursery school.

³ In the 1990s these included visits from the midwife the day after giving birth in hospital and then on the 5th and 10th day after birth. Mother and baby were then discharged into the care of the health visitor and encouraged to attend infant weight checks once a week until 8 weeks old as well as receive immunisations at the local health centre. From <http://www.bhrhospitals.nhs.uk/our-services/after-labour.htm> Retrieved 06.09.2015.

Mariko said that she had come to London as her mother felt it would be the best idea for herself and her soon-to-be born child as her husband had a good job in the city and had recently purchased a small house in Greenwich. Mariko said (with hindsight, perhaps) that she wasn't entirely comfortable with the decision to leave Japan but that she accepted her mother's advice was the way to go in order to ensure her own and her child's stability. However, having made the decision to move, Mariko did what she could to settle and feel at home in London, and one of the things she found to be quite interesting and useful to do was to watch television. The programme she most associates with her arrival in 1996 is *EastEnders*, a long running British soap about the lives and loves of a fictional borough in London's East End. As Mariko remembers:

I used to watch *EastEnders* all the time, innit (mimicking the colloquialism)! I thought it was quite strange. I used to think, is this how all British people are? Is this how they really behave, always having affairs and shouting? I used to find it funny and strange at the same time but I enjoyed it, especially because I liked to hear the accent. I could tell it was different from how B (her husband) would talk.

However, as the years passed Mariko's use for the single television in the home and its content began to change as well, changes that reflect and incorporate the breakdown of her marriage and the changing needs and interests of Mariko and her children. The loss of the primary wage earner meant that the family Sky satellite television subscription package had to be cancelled and replaced with a more economical Freeview device, which provides a free-to-air viewing. Her eldest daughter H's interest in a medical career now means that all manner of medical dramas such as *Casualty* and *Holby City* are viewed at home, with Mariko and her youngest daughter also participating in the viewing. Mariko used to find these programmes a little bit frustrating as she would have to ask one of the girls to clarify details that she might not understand, not necessarily due to language but occasionally due to the cultural differences between the British medical practices and NHS system as portrayed in these dramas and her own understanding of Japanese medical practices. When pressed for details, Mariko could not recall any specific instance but she said that these misunderstandings aren't happening as frequently now. She still

occasionally watches the odd episode of *EastEnders* with her daughters but is no longer so intrigued by the complex story-lines and relationships – it has become a bit boring for her now.

More recently, another use that that Mariko has cultivated for the television is the shared viewing of films with her daughters. She does not spend as much time in front of the television in 2011 as she did in the years when her children were growing up. This is representative of the growing ambivalence, indicated by many of my informants and discussed in Chapter Six, of television's function in the household which has evolved with the increasing reliance on the internet for personal use. During the immediate aftermath of her separation from her English husband, Mariko found that her subscription to Love Film provided an immediate and substantial distraction to the difficulties she was facing as a single parent.⁴ Her subscription became a life line of sorts, especially as she had found herself drinking to what she considered an excess in order to help her sleep at night. Now, with the regular delivery of DVDs she and her daughters could share a quiet night in and Mariko was quite literally able to leave all her troubles and daily trials behind as she found solace in the calming influence of the flickering screen and the presence of her daughters. She eventually took to occasionally watching films on her own during the day and she would organise her Japanese language students and domestic chores accordingly in order to devote "me" time for herself in the afternoons. Some films from this period which she found especially remarkable and relevant to her current mood and circumstance were *Milk* (2008), *Benjamin Button* (2008), *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1998), and *Chocolat* (2000), titles that feature a misfit protagonist struggling against the odds to find his or her place in society, which in turn can be said to mirror the frustrations that Mariko feels as she forges ahead with life as a single mum in London. Within Mariko's household the preference has now become to use the television and its more modern capacity for self selecting media (such as DVDs) in a way that serves the changing needs of the family.

⁴ She would often encourage me to sign up by listing the benefits. "Sylvie-chan, it's only £5.00 a month and all you have to do is pop the DVDs back in the post. You can even keep them as long as you like. There is no hurry to watch."

Asan used to watch British soaps as well as a new arrival into Britain, however she initially had a somewhat peripatetic existence before basing herself in London, while also spending time in Los Angeles, Hong Kong and Tokyo as she worked to establish her music career outside of Japan.⁵ Once she had settled into a flat and a more routine lifestyle, Asan recalls that “there was a time when I was watching *East Enders*, *Holby City* and *Brookside*. I watched quite a lot, and *Home and Away*. But I have stopped watching television for about two or three years now.” Asan is currently much more selective with her television viewing, especially as she now shares her viewing time and space with her husband. Asan was very clear in her assessment of what constitutes “stupid” programmes as she continued “I occasionally watch stupid programmes”. She then caught herself and with a shake of her head she restarted the sentence:

I shouldn't say stupid, but things [programmes] on Living [channel] like *Britain's Top Model* or *America's Top Model*, that kind of thing. And *X-Factor*, that kind of thing but sometimes I don't switch on at all...it's more fun surfing on the internet than watching dramas, because I have done that already, like *East Enders* and it's all the same stories anyway...But this also means that other channels are not producing good programmes...There is no point in starting to watch a new series, because when you miss one episode you feel like you can't be bothered.

Despite this qualitative assessment of the current state of British broadcasting, Asan still finds a purpose for the small screen, stating that “we have BBC 24, which I sometimes just leave on in the living room.” There are two televisions in the home, one in the sitting room and one in the bedroom, both which get regular use. A third set belonging to them is currently on long-term loan to a friend. Their television cable service is provided by “I think Virgin, I think. I shouldn't say ‘think’, I should know, but Virgin have changed their name so much. It used to be Telewest, but before that it was London Cable.” When Asan remarked that she was momentarily confused as the Virgin brand had changed their name so much, what she was commenting on was on the seemingly continuous nature of the takeover changes to her cable service. As

⁵ The circumstances of Asan's move to London are discussed further in Chapter 5.

we chat momentarily about the changing nature of cable television in London, Asan was surprised to hear that such provision adheres to regional boundaries within the various boroughs of the city. This observation emphasises how television broadcast and provision appear to be continuous and seamless phenomenon, almost as if without recognisable boundaries of any description to the casual and somewhat disinterested viewer. Television is there because it has always been there.

3.3 Manchester/Chester: Practice Begins At Home

Yumiko arrived in London in 1999, aged 34, from Sendai, with an open return ticket, (valid for one year) hopeful for her potential future yet pragmatic enough to ensure a way back home if things did not go as planned. J had been a JET programme teacher⁶ in Japan and he and Yumiko met when he was placed at the school she worked at, however when his contract was completed J was obliged to return to the UK. They both shared a common interest and enthusiasm for sport, and this common ground had resulted in a steady and serious relationship. Acknowledging the unsatisfactory nature of a long distance relationship, they agreed that Yumiko should come out to the UK in order to give their relationship a chance at succeeding in the long term. J had found a job in London so this is where Yumiko started her life in Britain. They were married in 2000, in a small wedding that Yumiko described as being “just a little party but a big drinking session...it was lovely!” She is from Akita originally but had moved to Sendai at 18 with a schoolmate in order to find work. Her parents were unable to fly out to attend her wedding, initially citing the difficulty and expense of the trip and only later revealing the truth to Yumiko that her father had been diagnosed with cancer during the year and had been booked for surgery on the actual day of her wedding. He eventually recovered but his health has been poor ever since and her parents dare not risk flying to the UK. Yumiko’s parents had been initially apprehensive about her moving to Britain as she was already 34 at the time and they viewed this as her last opportunity for personal happiness. The reality of her circumstance was framed quite bluntly, “if you go, there is no return”. Her mother was more forthright, telling Yumiko that “you are not so young, especially for Akita”.

⁶ JET (Japan Exchange and Teaching Programme) is a foreign exchange programme that promotes international relations between Japan and other nations primarily through language teaching. Source: <http://www.jetprogramme.org/e/introduction/index.html> Retrieved 17 August 2014.

Yumiko explained that as a more rural location, most women are married in their early 20s or else they resign themselves to living a single person's life.

Yumiko's main concern upon arrival was to develop her English ability. She found the first year to be quite a difficult adjustment period, not just because of the language issue but also used to her new lifestyle. The first location she lived with J was South Norwood in South London, an urban area that Yumiko describes as being "quite horrible." She witnessed for the first time the sort of occurrences that a more seasoned urban resident might find less disturbing such as burned out cars (presumed stolen) and even a mugging. Luckily they were soon able to move to a more genteel area of North London, Highgate, which she found much more to her liking. "Yes the first one year was quite difficult, especially as I didn't speak much English at the time. You have to use English to communicate. You have to get used to it!" Yumiko was emphatic that she depended on television as a means of improving her English language skills. She used to watch chat shows such as *Jerry Springer*, *Kilroy* and later *The Jeremy Kyle Show* and noted that to her they used what she described as "quite odd language, it's not textbook language" which meant that she found the quality of the English used was more emotional and the viewer was able to better understand and appreciate the turmoil of the participants. Although she did begin by watching *EastEnders* upon her arrival in London, Yumiko did not find the characters and storylines to her liking, preferring instead to watch the gentler and less harrowing Australian soaps broadcast at the time, *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*. Although Yumiko included soaps and chat shows in her language acquisition diet, she saved particular enthusiasm for watching films on the television and clarified that this was her preferred form of acculturation: "the visual is so much easier to understand for me – I couldn't understand English but I can understand people's expressions, so (and here she leant into my recorder in a rather conspiratorial manner) I can recommend to people to watch TV for the language. It's the easy way!"

After the first few years in London, Yumiko and her husband moved to Chester as his new job as a financial advisor for Premier League players required this transition to the north, thus linking Yumiko and her family to the cultural economy of sport in the UK. Yet there was more to this move than just a job transfer. Chester was chosen specifically because there was a small but established Japanese population. They both

considered that this social group would provide Yumiko with the opportunity to build ties of familiarity and friendship in the new location, and this has proven to be the case, “in Chester we have a Japanese community, so it’s important to have that kind of support”. In addition, her husband’s family live just a few minutes away from Chester on the Welsh side of the border and are on hand to offer additional help in the form of child care.⁷

Once she was in Chester, Yumiko would occasionally tune in to ITV’s *Coronation Street*, a regional variation of the British soap format. However, she found that attention to her English language development was better served by watching DVDs at home rather than standard British programming. She said that “now, for me it’s film, because I like film very much and I try to watch it without subtitles, so I have to understand, so sometimes I watch the same thing many, many times”. At this point in the conversation Yumiko began to correlate her use of the television for her English language development to the same use it had for her children’s Japanese language development, and this is discussed in section 3.6.

Despite her overall disapproval of the gritty realism of British drama, there were other programmes that Yumiko found more to her liking. She enjoyed watching cookery programmes when she could manage to find the time. Yumiko mentioned that her current favourite (in 2009) was “*Market Kitchen* on the Food Channel [Good Food Channel] because they show you what is in season. I like how they travel around the country so you can see the different ingredients that are available.” She also watched the English language channel *NHK World*, which is provided by Japan’s public broadcast organisation, *NHK*. Yumiko said that, “I am so pleased that *NHK World* is part of our Sky [satellite television] bundle because both my husband and I can keep up with the news in Japan and the girls can learn a bit more about Japan as well”. This statement reflects her maternal accountability in making sure the children are aware of their Japanese heritage above and beyond the Saturday language classes they attend at Lymm High School.

⁷ Her in-laws kindly offered help with child care during the course of our research interviews.

Yumi was the second interlocutor from the Manchester area. She was usually kind enough to pick me up from Marple train station, a pretty village outside of Manchester, in their black Honda saloon car for our interviews.⁸ For this meeting in November 2010, her six year old son T was sitting in the back seat. She was looking rushed and a little flustered but I put it down to the fresh autumn weather and the fact that she always seemed like a woman in a hurry. I always felt that she found our meetings as an unnecessary impingement on her time, and indeed she was a busy mum with a full time job as a classroom assistant at the local secondary school. As soon as I was in the car she began to apologise that she had forgotten about our meeting this afternoon as it was booked several weeks in advance. It wasn't until she had received my email the previous night reminding her that I would be seeing her tomorrow that she remembered. Unfortunately she had a parents evening at T's school to attend in a couple of hours so this meeting would have to be at her home, situated in the middle of a small terrace overlooking sloping fields of green. When I commented on the picturesque country view, Yumi merely shrugged and added that there is sometimes a horse out there. We both craned our necks but the pony was not in his field that afternoon. She only speaks Japanese to T, and Yumi tells me that she has explained this to him by telling him that she doesn't know any English and thus forcing him to speak Japanese in order to communicate with her. She smiled and added that he has probably worked out that she speaks English, especially as we were chatting in the car during the five minute drive to the house.

She thanked me for removing my shoes at the door unbidden⁹, then turns to T, “DVD o mitai desu ka?” asking him if he would like to choose a DVD to watch. This pleased him no end and T dashed into the living room next door where I could hear the clattering of DVD cases. Sitting at the dining room table in her house in Marple, Yumi's description of her viewing pattern indicates that she takes a more active interest in regular British broadcast television than some of my other interviewees. Along with the BBC news broadcast she prefers to watch British and American crime detective programmes such as *Prime Suspect*, *Law and Order UK*, *Dexter* and the various *CSI* franchises with her husband once their young son is in bed. She

⁸ Yumi's decision to come to the UK and her choice of Manchester as a residence is discussed in Chapter 5.

⁹ The act of removing one's shoes when entering a Japanese home is intrinsically linked to the division between the clean inside of the home (*uchi*) and the dirt outside the home (*soto*) (cf. Hendry 1987).

specifically traced this interest in crime dramas back to her childhood and recalled the fascination she had with the famously unsolved Japanese crime *The 300 Million Yen Robbery*, a bank heist that occurred in broad daylight and incurred no injuries. Yumi was intrigued by this event and remembers the blanket media coverage the crime received when it occurred on 10 December 1968. Her interest in the genre was further piqued and reinforced when news broke of the somewhat similar American unsolved crime of DB Cooper. “I remember thinking how strange and a little bit scary that such crimes could happen without being solved. I am sure that is why I find this sort of programme the most interesting.” She feels that her interest in this particular kind of programming mark her out as a little bit eccentric, maybe a little bit weird which in turn reflects how her choice in visual material becomes a forum for self expression and self individuation. Yumi made no explicit reference to her husband’s perspective in this choice of programming, implying instead that crime dramas were something that they both enjoyed in each other’s company.

By establishing a link between her current choice in programming with highly mediated events from her childhood, Yumi is actively linking the global with the local in a way that integrates the world of public broadcasting with that of the domestic sphere (Scannell 2007). As de-territorialised viewers both Yumiko and Yumi are choosing programming or specific uses for their television that they feel are the best fit for them as independent social agents, utilising an imagination fuelled in part by the potential and actual process of physical movement combined with the symbolic representations (provided electronically) that they have selected (Appadurai 1996). In this example Yumi has specifically provided a taste of how she produces a meaningful space by way of the cultural capital and competences that she has developed from her life as a Japanese woman now living in Britain. Yumi’s use of television is an example of how the meanings she has mobilised for herself from the programmes that she watches act as an example of what Fiske describes as a bridge between the textual and the social (1989).

3.4 Edinburgh: Less Television is More

Wakako had originally been to London on a few occasions in the early eighties as part of her job as a layout designer for a Japanese fashion magazine. She was the team member with the best English ability and so she was invaluable during these visits

with her colleagues. When she was made redundant from her post she decided it was time to fulfil a personal desire to come live in London for a short spell and learn English, never thinking that this country would become a permanent home for her. On her previous visits she had enjoyed the cultural awareness of London as expressed in the trendy street fashions and the club scene at the time. However Wakako eventually experienced a difficult personal disappointment in London and was left sufficiently let down with the capital and its inhabitants that she thought it might be a good idea to spend a few weeks with some good friends in Edinburgh on their invitation. At the start of our interview in 2010, Wakako had been a resident in Edinburgh for nine years, having married N, an Edinburgh native, in September 2001.

Overall the women in Edinburgh were less enthusiastic and expressed greater ambivalence about the current state of British television than I might have expected as there are less Japanese culture-based resources in Edinburgh compared to London and the Manchester/Cheshire area. For example, Wakako isn't much interested in television these days and prefers to spend her leisure time online. When she first moved in with her soon-to-be husband, they would watch several hours of television together a week, including British comedy sketch programmes such as *The Fast Show* that try as she might, Wakako could not quite get into enjoying as much as her husband. Without overtly ascribing this lack of enthusiasm to language or cultural difference, she said that this was because of her own lack of interest in comedy overall. As she phrased it, "I am not such a comedy person". She currently prefers to watch David Attenborough documentaries on television and both she and her husband will make the commitment in the long term to follow one of his nature series on the BBC. This is the only form of programming that Wakako is willing to dedicate any time to at the moment, and she prefers to spend her free time away from the only television in their flat in preference to time spent online in the small office space upstairs.

Kimiko, a member of the Edinburgh group, arrived in Edinburgh in similar circumstances to Yumiko in Chester. Her Scottish husband had also been an English teacher at a private English conversation school in Osaka where Kimiko worked, in fact she had pursued an administrative type job there in order to improve her own language skills. They married in Japan and Kimiko accompanied her new husband to

Edinburgh in 1994. She spoke of how she prefers watching soaps online rather than incurring the expense of buying the DVD for television viewing despite having to put up with the incursion of adverts into the online viewing experience. This was partly due to the fact that time spent on line was very much a private luxury that was hers exclusively. Kimiko did not feel that she would get the same enjoyment watching such programmes on the family television in the more public space of the living room. That is not to say that she was not willing to share her viewing pleasure with other members of the family because her husband often watched online soaps with her upstairs in the bedroom, using the computer monitor as a second screening device. Kimiko says that she did not connect with Japanese television at all until she found *Toudou* (a Chinese based online video sharing site). She then passed on the link to Kazuko and now they both share their enthusiasm for online viewing rather than using the more conventional medium of television.

Kimiko, who gives the impression of being one of life's more enthusiastic participants, became more excited as she sang the praises of online media over that of television, "You can watch films too, quite updated films! Can you believe the longest I have spent watching online programmes is 10 hours – but only on the weekend of course!"¹⁰ Kazuko gently reprimanded her "It's because you have been away from Japan for too long, you have missed Japanese culture." Wakako remarked that she preferred going back to her past for her online viewing because she was not interested in searching out new programmes to watch. Wakako explained that she always looks to the past for her television pleasure, not towards the future the way that Kimiko and Kazuko do. She preferred watching clips of old Japanese folk tales online as these reminded her of her own childhood and she found a good deal of comfort in this particular pastime.¹¹ What they all unanimously agreed on was that it was so much easier and comfortable listening to things in your own language.

Kazuko provided another reason for her preference for watching programmes online rather than on the television. Kazuko was the quietest and the most conservatively dressed of the group, always in subdued colours, always with a neat jacket and

¹⁰ This incident is referenced again in Chapters Six and Seven.

¹¹ By the time a first draft of this chapter was written in November 2012, the YouTube links to *Manga Nihon Mukashi Banashi* (まんがにほんむかしばなし) had been removed due to Japanese copyright laws.

minimal accessories. She arrived in the UK in 1989 aged 26, ostensibly because she wanted to see new places, have new experiences and improve her English language skills. Educated in a Christian school, Kazuko's pastor in Japan knew of a suitable gentleman in London who would serve as an appropriate chaperone for her visit, and this is how she ended up in London despite the fact that her first preferences for this trip were either America or Canada. Kazuko married her kindly companion who then became an ordained pastor himself and she has now been in Edinburgh for 10 years. Kazuko was often very reserved at our interviews and would lean back in her seat and allow the others to do the great majority of the talking. But now and again, Kazuko would lean forward, and the rest of the group would fall silent. At this point in the conversation, Kazuko made her contribution in the form of a comment that echoed Yumiko's distaste for the more graphic nature of English soaps. Kazuko explained that: "The drama here in the UK was such a shock when I first arrived...I found it a bit too much. Sometimes I feel that when I watch British drama, it's too graphic." She told us of how as a newly married wife of a conservative Christian Englishman, they sat down to watch an episode of the latest period drama *The Camomile Lawn* (1992). Kazuko then explained what happened next,

I was really concentrating on trying to follow the language and the story at the same time when all of a sudden this naked lady appeared on the screen. She was completely, completely naked. I was really shocked but also kind of interested because we didn't have anything like this in Japan. I was thinking, wow so this is England, when all of a sudden my husband jumped up and stood in front of the telly with his arms out. I was trying to look around him because, wow, there was a naked woman on the television!

Kazuko and her husband were not the only members of the British public that were shocked by the sight of the actor Jennifer Ehle's full frontal nudity of this particular period piece. Broadcast in 1992 on Channel 4, *The Camomile Lawn* nonetheless became a popular miniseries during its broadcast and is still available as a DVD box set on Amazon.co.uk. The women of the Edinburgh group stressed the importance of relaxing story-lines and scenarios especially with regard to watching soap operas. Both Yumiko and Kazuko expressed apprehension at the gritty realism of British soap content and expressed clear displeasure at how these feelings of discomfort marred a

supposedly relaxing and leisure experience for them. Kazuko was quick to note what she perceived to be differences in the depiction of Japanese and British social values in television dramas. She voiced an appreciation for what she described as the fixed themes of Japanese dramas, themes which stress, for example, the importance of co-operation, social harmony, loyalty and teamwork. On the other hand, British dramas often stress the internal struggle of the individual character and the difficulties this presents to others within their social group – qualities which are not particularly valued in Japanese society (cf. Hendry 1987, Martinez 2004).

Kazuko said that she was not really interested in television anyway as did not have the time to watch, however, later on in the interview process she did admit to watching Japanese dramas online and this is discussed in Chapter Seven. On the other hand, Kimiko enjoyed watching the American comedy drama *Ugly Betty* but switched her allegiance to online viewing as this suited her better than following a prescribed broadcast. The only programme she would try to watch on a regular basis was X-Factor, but this was “only if I can manage it.”

Thus it would appear that this particular group of women do not differentiate between television as technology and television as practice, nor is there any reason why they should as the television itself is the embodiment of the socially prescribed practices that attend to that particular technology. It is seen as “a general human property, an extension of general human capacity” (Williams 1974:132). It seems that to have the device at home is to participate in a predetermined or an agreed upon set of practices, that is, one watches television to relax or to inform or to be entertained in some way that is separate from other domestic household or work practices. What needs to be considered in light of this is whether or not these practices are institutionalised within the individual and/or the family and how are they embedded into the fabric of the household via the children.

3.5 A Life Without Television

Of all the women interviewed, only one has chosen to live a life unmitigated by a televisual presence. Chika arrived in Liverpool in 1987, spending six years in the city and attending John Moores University in that time before spending another year in Manchester doing an art foundation course. She moved to London in 1995 after

Manchester as she felt her job prospects would improve and here she continued to explore the various creative outlets the city has to offer. As we drink our tea in the busy student cafeteria that is a few paces from her teaching space on the UCL campus Chika tells me that she has never been much interested in television given that she doesn't feel that there would be anything of interest to her, nor would she have the time to watch it anyway. This is entirely feasible given her lifestyle at the time of the interview, however I argue that Chika's non-engagement indicates a deliberate resistance contemporary mass culture. In September 2010, Chika was focussing on organising her Japanese language lessons as an independent tutor. In addition to this she was formally employed as a Japanese language teacher at City Lit in London, where she was also planning various short courses on aspects of Japanese culture.¹² She was also DJing under the pseudonym DJ Yaminabe and co-hosted a number of music events at Life Bar in London. These events were promoted by the music organization formed by her ex partner, a BBC radio DJ. Chika had also just organised and hosted a Japanese film evening at SOAS at the time of the interview.

Despite the non-televisual aspects of her current life Chika retains extremely fond memories of watching British music programmes in the early 1990s during her time in Manchester, namely, *Top of the Pops* and *The Tube*. She recalled sitting in a small kitchen in a friend's flat in Hulme, "there would be six or eight of us gathered around a tiny black and white television watching *Top of the Pops*. It was so exciting to see the bands that we loved playing their music on that tiny television!" This description encapsulates how viewing television with friends and family can become more than just a simplified viewing experience for the individual involved. Chika has described how the occasional shared experience of watching *Top of the Pops* with friends was not just about catching up on the latest trendy bands of the time but that the shared viewing experience became a platform for a shared social and cultural experience that she still recalls as a key element of her life at that time.

Following de Certeau's (1984) premise which considers that cultural engagement is not a passive process but an activity that employs a degree of tactical resistance, I

¹² City Lit is an educational centre for adults in Covent Garden. It offers a wide range of daytime, evening and weekend courses throughout the year. Opened in 1919, City Lit now offers over 5,000 courses to over 30,000 students. Source: http://www.citylit.ac.uk/about/About_us Retrieved 03/05/14.

would like to reassess Chika's decision to not pursue televisual engagement as indicating a resistance on the other end of the spectrum in that she has deliberately rejected that which she considers to be normal and average. She feels that she makes a greater contribution to her social world by producing live textual events (I am including her language lessons here) which in turn absolutely declare her status as a non-native Brit and reaffirms her identity as a native Japanese woman. As with standard television broadcasting, where the process of production can be readily assessed by the end product, Chika cannot access in any substantial manner (apart from her classroom assessments) how or what the information she is 'broadcasting' is received by her varying audiences and this element of her personal communication crusade remains dispersed and invisible. This is one example of how Chika chooses to resist and circumvent the more popular forms of media consumption via television in a manner that brings together her specific habitus and cultural capital expressed through explicit forms of social practice (Bourdieu 1984). By actively rejecting the lure, or the perceived passivity of television, Chika has embodied her particular resistance by enacting a position in her social life that encompasses her need to communicate (this is explored further in the following chapter). Furthermore, because Chika has opted out of television as practice, she has marked out how this rejection can still serve as a technology for the self by constituting how she is perceived by herself and others through other specific non-televisual practices (Foucault 1988).

3.6 The Reiteration of Practice

I asked each of my participants if they had ever considered subscribing to the Japanese satellite service JSTV as a viable means of maintaining a televisual link with Japan.¹³ Not one of the interviewees had ever even considered this as an option due to the steep setup costs and subscription fees. Asan had mentioned that although she did not have JSTV and did not know of any other Japanese residents who did, she thought it could be useful to those with children (she does not have children) as it would provide access to continuous language and cultural materials but this observation did not bear fruit. Not one of the mothers interviewed had paid access to

¹³ Japanese Satellite Television is available in London and throughout Europe and the Middle East for home, office, restaurant and hotel subscription. Source: <http://www.jstv.co.uk/english/> Retrieved 11.03.12.

JSTV nor did they think that the cost of the service would be worth the perceived benefits that access to Japanese broadcast television would bring. There had to be other ways of introducing a Japanese televisual presence, whether this was textual or through practice.

How, then, are the children of these Japanese women introduced to the social life of television? How are they inducted into the individual family or local or national practices that serve to define the technology in the domestic sphere? Chun notes how television as both a technology and a broadcast medium in Japan became feminised due to the purchasing power of housewives in the late 1950s (2006). As household managers in the post-occupation era, Japanese wives would hold off their purchase of television sets in the belief that the price would continue to go down. There was also the perceived unfamiliarity of housewives with the new technology and this particular concern was addressed in an article in the *Shukan Asahi* in 1956, which advocated television viewing on the basis that there was “no need to bother with thinking” in order to enjoy it. The consequence of advocating a passive form of reception was that concerns about the negative influence of television on Japan’s children were quickly flagged up. Chun further postulates that middle class women became prime consumers of television content especially as their husbands were at the workplace, thus establishing a particular viewing demographic that needed to be catered to. He quotes the *Sunday Mainichi* which indicates how their lives were transformed by television by giving Japanese housewives the opportunity to glimpse the world beyond their national borders (ibid: 82).

So how does this glimpse into the world beyond their national borders become something that enables or empowers or constitutes the desire to create a physical mobility and placement? Does this embodiment imply a tacit resistance to the expected order of their lives that has somehow been enabled through their mediated experiences, a resistance? This cannot be strictly the case as my interlocutors in this chapter clearly had other more personal motivations that brought them to Britain. But these attitudes would have been in place in the family homes that my informants were raised in. There is evidence that these families were aware of the lifestyle changing potential of habitual television viewing and tried to counteract the perceived negative influence by controlling the content and viewing time of their children (as outlined in

Chapter 1). These women went on to introduce similar measures as mothers here in the UK.

Kazuko and her husband limit their son's television viewing and base this decision on the recommendation of the Edinburgh Steiner School which their son attends. *The Parent's Handbook* clearly outlines the Steiner-approved ethos of perceived delay and damage to a child's development should they participate in an excessive amount of engagement with the television. Although there are no specific suggestions for viewing times, the handbook presents the Steiner philosophy about the importance of play and the overall negative effects of extensive exposure to television as a technology and the programming itself in restricting the social development of the child.¹⁴ Kazuko's son J was seven at the time of this interview in 2010, and she noted with a hint of disappointment that he expressed a clear preference for English language material, although he did enjoy the Japanese cartoons *Doraemon* and *Hamutaro*, albeit dubbed in English.

The imposition of parental controls on children's television viewing is also a component of Yumi's parenting style. Her young son T is only allowed to watch his favourite programmes on the weekends, which he watches with his father. In the meeting described above, his joy at being allowed to choose and watch a *Ben 10* DVD on the occasion of my meeting with his mother was clearly evident. Yumi's explanation for her attitudes towards children and television derives from the ethos she was raised with, that is, that television is not particularly useful for the developing intellect (as outlined in Chapter Four). Her husband has no issue with this approach to child-rearing, or at least Yumi did not mention any kind of resistance on his part. This is very different to Yumiko's attempts to limit her daughters' access to television as outlined below.

Yumiko was always happy to discuss football and she took plenty of interest in the fortunes of Manchester United, which her husband's family had actively supported since his grandfather declared himself a supporter upon the resumption of league football after the war in the 1940s. These discussions occasionally covered how

¹⁴ Kazuko helpfully directed me to the online handbook so that I could understand the approach for myself. <http://www.edinburghsteinerschool.org.uk/parents/school-handbooks/> Retrieved 06.11.11

difficult it was to focus on a match shown on television with two young children who needed their own entertainment during the crucial cup matches that were watched as a (multi-generational) family event. Despite her young daughters' (aged 3 and 5 at the time of the interview) inability to stay focussed for the duration of an entire Man U televised match they had already been initiated into upholding the family tradition of support for the team. Yumiko said that the girls "now understand a bit more about football, they recognise Manchester United and they can chant a little bit too." The eldest daughter had already been to see her first match a little earlier in the year at the same age that her father had been to his first match and both girls had home team kit. As Yumiko phrased her extended family's enthusiasm, "...it's a kind of brainwashing. You have to support Manchester United, you cannot support any other team. It's very, very serious!" The use of athletic spectacle both in and outside the home are a key to this particular family's sense of self as Man U fans, an identity that they have been willing to broaden in order to accommodate new arrivals into the family.

Yumiko was also actively using her television in order to help her daughters with their Japanese language acquisition. Just as she had used television upon her arrival in the UK to advance her listening and understanding skills in English, she reiterated this particular practice with her daughters:

The children watch Japanese DVDs and Japanese film, and now with the internet you can watch YouTube and you can access it anytime. Like with my English development, the children can watch Japanese language...They have DVDs at Chester library so it's fantastic, they have all kinds, Hello Kitty, things like that.

The eldest daughter had, by the time of this interview in June 2010, begun her first "proper" year at the Japanese Saturday school in Lymm, forty minutes outside of Chester. Yumiko felt that this immersive experience was more useful to the children, despite the fact that "on the first day she was crying, but the teacher never used English, so now she is used to it, now she is pretty confident." However there were still some tensions at home regarding what Yumiko felt was the girls' over exposure to television. In an interview one year later in July 2011, Yumiko gave me this

thorough breakdown of their viewing habits when asked if the girls were watching much television at the moment:

They are watching all the time. I try to stop so rather than watch TV I switch on the radio. But my husband, instead of switching off the TV he just changes the channel. He loves TV so he allows them to watch TV all the time to keep them quiet. But now he can watch cricket on his mobile, he has a laptop, tablet and mobile on all the time. It's not good for the children, all this watching. I am kind of frustrated, because (there is) no conversation just watching all the time. But we are in 2011, so we are like this.

Later on in the conversation Yumiko gave me the clearest indication of how her own practice at home reflects her upbringing in Akita in the 1970s:

In the mornings, my dad used to decide what we watched on TV. So I have never watched kids' TV in the morning. I thought it was the normal thing, because at 7 or 8 in the morning there was kids' television programmes on but my dad never allowed us to watch it. But I think it was a good thing. I still do it at home. If you let them watch TV they don't do anything, just watching TV. They don't get ready for school. They get home about 4:00 and I allow them to watch television until dinner time, about 5:30. Just one and a half hours on [the] weekday, but [on the] weekend, if they are not going anywhere, they will watch television from 7:00 'til whatever they want.¹⁵

A bit later on, Yumiko gave an example of how she feels that newer technologies can be harnessed in such a way as to act as a television inhibitor when the parental will might be problematic:

But now we have a slightly complicated system to switch on, with the DVD, that's great so they can't switch it on themselves so they have to ask me to switch it on for them and I can say, no not now. But soon they will find out

¹⁵ Note that this assertion that children's programmes were broadcast in the morning when she was a child in Japan contradicts her statement in the previous chapter that such programming was only on for an hour. These interviews took place more than a year apart. I believe that the earlier interview quoted in Chapter Two meant to reflect how much television she remembered watching.

they can switch it on for themselves! My husband has already talked about it, but there is a system on Sky, my sister in law has it, it is a code that you can punch in that lets you watch one channel upstairs and the children can watch something else downstairs. I said, hmmm I don't know I don't think it's a good thing to do. ...I don't think we need so much TV. They can download programs from Sky TV website and watch it on the tablet. And my children love film, not so much the children's programme, they want to watch film. So yesterday they watched *Nanny McPhee* [2005] instead of the regular children's program. And it's a good thing, they can concentrate for one and a half hours so that's a good skill for school.

Yumiko struggles to regulate television while her partner is not bothered by limits on the children's viewing. This is one area of differing practice that Yumiko feels is best resolved by the very technology that causes the situation. As the children get older she is aware that there will be adjustments to her influence over their viewing habits but until then she is pleased that they are expressing a preference for "proper" films rather than the "regular children's programmes". Just as Gillespie's young interlocutors reported that it was the females in the home who had greater control over televisual material because of their perceived position as bearers of tradition (1995:80), my interviewees expressed various ways that they tried to influence the television practice of their children, with varying degrees of success.

3.7 Contextualizing the Technology and the Practice

Television in the UK has become another essential domestic appliance, an integral part of the domestic sphere that includes the myriad of tools, technologies and appliances that make our lives convenient. The presence of one or several televisions in the home is now considered an essential element of any home regardless of income bracket or social class. However, despite what the saturation levels of television ownership may overtly suggest, Britain is not, or ever has been, a homogenous country. It is a nation rife with domestic internalised boundaries such as the urban/countryside division and the division between ancient nations such as England, Scotland and Wales and smaller regions such as Cornwall. These regional identities are expressed in speech patterns and accents and include identities determined by class distinction, nuances that are immediately clear to the casual tourist observer and

are implicit to non-native residents. In addition, there have been generations of immigrant populations from Britain's empirical legacy and political, economic and cultural refugees who have found safety and comfort within the country's island borders. But one of Britain's unifying influence in recent times has been the mass media (Storry and Childs 1996) and it is through the medium of television that the dominant culture is most visibly able to create and circulate meanings and pleasures within society (Fiske 1989). An example of how this feature of television in Britain operates is evident in annual rituals such as Christmas, which are mediated through television by means of a programming schedule which aims to link families and media in seasonal ritual. This is also true of key events in the sporting calendar, which are recognizably key arenas for the construction of a sense of British identity and are a significant form of broadcasting for cultural minorities who may otherwise have limited access to mainstream British culture (Gillespie 1995).

Since the mass uptake of television in both Japan and Britain this particular form of home media has shown itself to be a more nuanced technology than it would have been possible to predict. As television established its broadcasting primacy in both countries over the decades it has been simultaneously accused of potentially encouraging or hindering the thinking prowess of the viewing public. It was charged with establishing national pride as an integral part of the nation building exercise and instilling social awareness as well as bringing about the decline of these sentiments (Gauntlett 2002). As Raymond Williams noted, television and its attendant practices became symbolic of all that was right or wrong about a society (1990). What is evident in the viewing practices outlined by my interviewees is how watching television and the textual content of British television is seen by the Japanese women of this study to be integrated into the common identity of the UK to such a degree that the practice of selecting and viewing specific programme choices become in themselves a form of selective contact with British society.

For example, for Mariko and Yumiko, using the television for films is considered by the both of them to be a more informed use for the television rather than allowing a more uncontrolled flow of broadcast media into the home environment. What this indicates is that these women brought over their preconceptions and attitudes towards television as a medium and the televisual practices they internalised whilst in Japan

(as argued in the following chapter). This is most likely made possible because the media environment in both Britain and Japan share enough characteristics in form, text and broadcast ethos to make the transfer of television ideology not just desirable but necessary to reap the perceived benefits and to avoid the perceived inadequacies of the medium and its content. The willingness to engage with television in this way can be contrasted with Chika's decision to specifically not engage with television as she chooses to invest her time and energy in alternative channels of communication with British culture and society.

The early questionnaires and interviews revealed different facets of television use that stem from their lives in Japan and have fed into its current use by the participants, for example, Mariko has very specific recollections about her television use as a child that have fed into her media interests as an adult. We discussed some of the animation she most enjoyed and Mariko specified her enthusiasm for the genius of Akira Toriyama, the *manga-ka* (professional comic book artist) best known in the West as the artist whose work was turned into the animated series *Dragon Ball Z*. Mariko remembers watching and loving his pre-*Dragon Ball* series, *Dr. Slump* because she enjoyed the cute and eccentric characters. Toriyama's facility with characterization was the main reason Mariko began to play the *Dragon Quest* (he designs the characters for this role-playing series) games on her Nintendo DS.

Because of her previous life experience with music, Mariko found that Apple computer systems provided the compatibility she needed for her music compositions. Although she had ceased to be under contract to Warner Japan since 1995, Mariko sustained a small-scale musical career from her London home until 2006, when she made a decision to cut her ties with the music industry for good.¹⁶ She is now a devout Apple Inc. enthusiast and often discussed the desirability of the latest Apple hardware such as the latest generation iPhone and the new iPad. She is singularly bound up in a media oriented lifestyle in such a way that is hard to equate her daily experience with those of the other participants in Edinburgh and Manchester. None of the other participants had any interest in playing video games or having any gaming

¹⁶ During this time Mariko was signed to *Shimmy Disc*, a small independent label based in Tokyo. She released three EPs under *Shimmy Disc* and would occasionally travel to Japan in order to play small club dates as a solo artist. She was also under contract as a song-writer and had some minor success in this area.

machines in the home, although Yumi mentioned that her husband was keen on an Xbox for Christmas (2010), and Waki's husband used to be a keen gamer himself although none of the Nintendo gaming machines are currently in use. Many women did have the Nintendo Famicom gaming system in the family home when they were teenagers but have not chosen to pursue the activity into adulthood. So how exclusive is Mariko's experience? I would argue that her expression of preferred leisure activities and consumer goods is one particular way that she performs her perception of herself as a Japanese woman.

It is essential to note that the women I interviewed are members of the first generation to have been raised in a home with a television from birth, or at least from their earliest awareness, entertaining and informing the domestic space from the most advantageous and perhaps ostentatious spot in the family home, a dedicated spot in the family's general lounge or living room. In Asan's case, this omnipresence has helped to cultivate a kind of nonchalance regarding the sources of televised content. Buonanno identifies this particular generation as "television's children," the generation who are too young to remember a time without television (2008:14). They have grown up in homes that were oriented to a middle class consumerist ideal, where a television was intrinsic to domestic life, as were refrigerators and washing machines, the "three sacred treasures" of the modern Japanese lifestyle, one that served to legitimise the post war middle class nuclear family in Japan as elsewhere in the West (Chun 2006, Ivy 1995). But more than that, these women were raised in homes where the social practices of family television viewing, the participation, the conversation, the rules and opinions became quotidian facets of life, for and as, a Japanese person. These social practices were then easily situated to their new domestic spheres in Britain and proved to be efficacious within their new environment.

All media can be considered as "products of specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions" and in this respect the development of television as an industry and as a consumer item in both the West and in Japan was no different (Robertson 1998:37). These products will inevitably bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions as part of their being and this will be reflected in the performances they produce. As Robertson notes, popular culture comprises social

formations (and to this I would add practices) that mark and sustain, for an indeterminate period, some distinction among the ubiquitous elements of everyday life (ibid:35). What is understood is that the introduction of television brought with it a particular sociability that was necessary to take part in the rituals of viewing that characterised the early years of its introduction to mainstream society. These tenets of sociability consisted of domestic practices in which neighbours, friends and family gathered around the television set in a quasi-theatrical arrangement in the home prior to its mass uptake in the West (cf. Buonanno 2008, Williams and Williams 1990).

Knowledge of, and familiarity with, the potentialities of television use in Britain arises from an integrated and embodied knowledge of the technology and its prescribed formats that comes from a combination of habitual use and their technologically mediated mobilities (Moore 2005). It is evident that all the women of this study embody a precise and articulate ability to navigate the televisual landscape through lived experience of the medium as a reflection, or perhaps because of, their experience with the super-mediated Japanese popular culture, or mediascape, of their homeland. They are aware of the possibilities and limitations of various media forms and their choices are made accordingly.

3.8 Conclusion

As indicated in the narratives above, one indication of this chapter so far is that it is difficult or impossible to separate the act of watching television from other engagement with electronic media as our current devices all favour a bias towards ocularist engagement. This chapter has specifically focussed not so much on what is on television, or what my informants were watching, but has tried to examine the televisual experience as an epistemological device (Postman 1985). This is indicated and is made manifest through “its ways of using the products imposed by a dominant economic order”, that is, the women of this study have found ways to manipulate the imposition of products and texts in ways that are meaningful to them (Gillespie 1995:13). The television audience, as consumers and producers of representations within the domestic sphere, are able to take control of their lives through the “silent, transgressive, ironic or poetic activity” of the readers, and in this way the strategies of the powerful are resisted (de Certeau 1984). Thus, in order to understand the effectiveness of TV we need to study not only the images and narratives but what the

consumer makes or does with them. But this is not to represent the Japanese women of this study as a quantifiable discursive construction but rather as social agents who have developed, and continue to develop, quotidian media practices that will forever elude any attempts to fix and objectify the meanings inherent in these practices (Moore 1993). As Mariko's personal life continues to be subject to the unforeseen upheaval of her marriage breakdown, she is clearly able to manipulate, bend and reinterpret her home media practices and search out the texts that are most meaningful to her at this time. All of the women in this chapter have recognised television's ability to offer up a sense of an imagined yet knowable community within the confines of an unfamiliar (at least initially) social setting (Anderson 2006).

The key principle is that these women bring their internalised, nuanced and subliminal practices of television participation and are able to seamlessly slip into the mediascapes of their adopted home country without any obvious or significant disruption to what constitutes familiar norms with regard to television. What is apparent, however, is that despite the similarity in social practice forms, many of the women found discordant and disagreeable content on British television upon arrival yet they were able to incorporate these texts into their understanding of British society or find alternative content that they felt complimented their tastes and lifestyles in a more fulfilling manner. This is not to suggest that there was an uncritical acceptance, but rather that they were able to pick and choose which televisual representations of Britishness they incorporated into their own world views. What we are able to discern is how the popular culture capital deployed by these women is used to enable this particular group of social actors to become producers of their own culture and the makers of their own meanings and pleasures (Fiske 1989). And within this frame of reference we see these women operating as distinct social agents that reproduce and regenerate those meanings. They seem to be living embodiments of Bourdieu's classic assessment of how "taste classifies and it classifies the classifier" (1984: 6).

Chapter Four: A Mediated Cosmopolitanism

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will argue that my informants' narratives and reminiscences suggest that a mediated childhood in Japan may have played a part in the formation of an adult cosmopolitan perspective. The relevance of these reminiscences was stimulated in part through the use of questionnaires and further details were discussed via constructed interviews in Manchester and daily contact with my interlocutors in London. The Edinburgh data was collected via questionnaires and expanded upon during subsequent conversations that included both constructed and unconstructed interviews as outlined in the introduction chapter. Given that the objective of this thesis is an examination of how Japanese women use media as a means of negotiating a non-native cultural setting through the forging of a negotiable and fluid sense of self in the UK, this chapter will examine the possibility of connecting the gendered experience of one's native media environment within the domestic sphere with the development of a cosmopolitan imagination. Inherent in this notion is the acknowledgment that there is a sense of personal agency which motivates individuals to desire the experience of new places and societies.

What I am formulating here is some indication of how the root practices of identity formation may be constituted within the processes of agency as informed by the individual's native cultural resources. I am implicating the normative Japanese discourse of *uchi* (inside) and *soto* (outside) as an integral part of the development of the cosmopolitan perspective that was evident in the narratives of the women I spoke to. As outlined in the introductory chapter, *uchi/soto* is a spatial identifier in both language and practice. Essentially, *uchi* signifies who and what is part of the internal familial sphere, while *soto* indicates who or what is not. This chapter argues that the boundaries that seem to exist between these two concepts become fluid and less clear through the introduction of media texts in the home. What would normally be considered obvious components of the *soto* environment such as cowboys, spacemen, robots and even nose-twitching witches become an integral part of the *uchi* environment as these texts are happily welcomed into the home.

The theoretical position in this chapter is based on the observation that a personal sense of cosmopolitanism runs through the life decisions of these women, specifically with regard to their life-changing decision to move to and remain in the UK. I will support this position by arguing that the domestic sphere provides a structured yet multilayered social space that establishes the baseline social, cultural and symbolic capital for the child as they learn and assume the life practices that will allow them to find their place in modern society (Bourdieu 1984). There is clearly the inference among the media memories of the women I interviewed that the cosmopolitan narrative begins in the domestic sphere, which above all indicates that there is a degree of safety and comfort in the home environment that provides the viewer with a socially sanctioned starting point to explore the more visceral elements of an increasingly global perspective (Nava 2007). It is a quality that extends beyond Szerszynski and Urry's (2006) banal globalism, which refers to the proliferation of global symbols and narratives made available through the media and popular culture. What these women experienced as young media participants is a more potent combination that hinges on where the participant is situated when these symbols and narratives are first encountered and the family politics and national policies that introduced these texts into the home in the first place.

I begin this chapter by outlining the ethnographic narratives of my interlocutors and suggest how geopolitical forces may have flavoured mediated encounters with the 'other'. This term implies that self-awareness is constructed through the practice of exclusion (Simmel 1964). The continuous reconstitution of the self is therefore derived from the processes of "specific exclusions, conventions and discursive practices" (Clifford 1986:24). I then examine how domestic media practices and use sanctioned such encounters via family programmes and children's cartoons. These experiences are then analysed through the lens of the Japanese discourse of *uchi/soto*, which according to Bachnik is the most fundamental of paired terms in the orientation of the Japanese self within society (1994).

4.2 The Emergent Cosmopolitan

The following conversation with Mariko is the exchange that brought into focus one of the research questions that had begun to emerge from my fieldwork, namely, if it was possible that an awareness of 'the other' was somehow communicated to the

burgeoning Japanese self through experience with mediated forms. Not long after Elizabeth Taylor's death in March 2011, Mariko and I were talking about the life and death of celebrities on the way to Sainsbury's¹ one morning when she mentioned that it was with the death of a particularly famous Western celebrity in 1977 that she first became aware of an outside world. Mariko was 11 years old at the time and lived in Hiroshima with her parents and older brother. She clarified for me:

I remember when the first famous Western person that I can remember died, it was still the 70s. I think it was John Lennon? *Eto ne*², no, it was when Elvis Presley died that I suddenly realized that there was another world out there. I don't mean China or Korea, because of course I knew those were other countries outside of Japan, but I mean that there were other countries beyond that, where other people that I hadn't heard of or knew about, lived and died.

This is an extraordinary comment in many respects. This was a reflection on the sudden impingement of a global awareness onto the imagination of a primary school aged child. She describes with clarity how the world became something bigger and more meaningful for her upon hearing the news of the sudden and unexpected death of the iconic Elvis. This is a surprising revelation because Mariko had previously talked about watching and enthusiastically enjoying the American situation comedy series *Okusama no Majo* (*Bewitched*) dubbed into Japanese as a younger child:

I used to watch that American programme about the witch, you know, the one who would wiggle her nose. And she had a child that was a witch too. Me: Oh, you mean *Bewitched*? Mariko: Yes I think so. We called it *Okusama no Majo*, "My Wife is a Witch" [in English]. I used to think that everyone spoke Japanese, because all of the American programmes that we used to watch had Japanese voices. So I thought it was normal that a blonde person would be speaking in Japanese!

¹ By choosing Sainsbury's Mariko and I are placing ourselves in the middle of our locality's range of socio-economic shopping choices. Asda is considered to be a slightly down-market supermarket and we are not one of the few families that can afford their weekly shopping at Marks and Spencers. This perception is by common agreement among those of us who live and shop in the Westcombe Park area and I am including it to give an idea of how my interlocutors place themselves socially.

² This Japanese expression is a colloquialism similar to 'ummm' or 'let me think' in English.

Clearly a Western presence within the home via the television screen (albeit dubbed into Japanese) would have been a regular and unremarkable occurrence. So how was it that the sudden awareness of an outside world should impose itself so spectacularly with the death of Elvis?

There perhaps was not a sudden burst of awareness of the outside world as her description implies, but may have come about as the result of the drip feed of continuous television news coverage as the eyes of much of the world's media focussed on Memphis, Tennessee for a short time after the events of 17 August 1977. Mariko can't recall the exact moment when the conceptual penny dropped but she further recalled seeing the coverage on the televised news and on the front page of the newspaper at home and has now formed a permanent connection with the death of Elvis to her own surprise at having to acknowledge the existence of the global other. She was not old enough, or sufficiently aware of Elvis to remember what she was doing when she heard the news as someone a few years older might do. But the sudden news had subsequent economic force in Japan as posthumous sales of Elvis Presley records began to skyrocket and this would have been accompanied by an increased musical and visual presence in assorted media outlets, not just in her home town of Hiroshima, but nationwide.

According to Elvis researcher and blogger Nick Keene at *Elvis Australia*, The King's record sales in Japan in 2005 alone were 3.7 billion USD.³ Throughout the nineties there was sufficient interest among Japanese youth in the stylistic element of the Elvis look (including James Dean) that Theodore Bestor noted in an online interview that "dressing up as sort of teenagers of the fifties in leather jackets with slick back hair is popular in Japan these days."⁴ In the same interview Bestor comments that Japanese teenagers don't necessarily see America as the source for popular culture but rather that these particular fashion trends are part of a global popular culture that anyone can dip into. In this manner the icons of 1950s American popular culture become the icons of 1990s Japan (ibid). This observation illustrates how the trope of Western modernity had become a contour or an enhancement on the quotidian subjectivity that

³ "For the Billionth and the Last Time: Lifting the Lid on The King's Record Sales". http://www.elvis.com.au/presley/one_billion_record_sales.shtml Accessed 24/01/12.

⁴ "Contemporary Japan : Popular Culture – American Pop-Culture Retro-Boom" http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/at/contemp_japan/cjp_pop_05.html Accessed 22/01/12

can guide the user of such capital into a cosmopolitan frame of mind. The exposure to this kind of popular culture imagery would for the most part appear to be inescapable in such a media saturated country as Japan, and by the late 1970s images and the very concept of America and the west became part of ordinary life of Japanese people precisely because of the great quantity of visual material broadcast to them over the long period that began in the post war era (Yoshimi and Buist 2003).

Mariko's reluctance or inability to acknowledge a world beyond Asia prior to August 1977 is also surprising given that Hiroshima is of course recognised as the site of the first nuclear bombing by the American military on August 6th, 1945. This tragic event led to Hiroshima's reinvention as a Peace Memorial City and the centre of town became the site of the Peace Memorial Park which is marked by the closest surviving building to the site of the detonation.⁵ Mariko's locality was therefore saturated with the historic reminder of the horrors of war and the existence of a cruel and merciless 'other', something that would have certainly been reflected in the city's social structure. The nearby Iwakuni U.S. Marine Corps base would have been a constant presence and reminder to the citizens of Hiroshima of the region's status as a starting point for America's sphere of influence in Japan in the post WWII period. It is likely that what may be obvious to the external observer is less obvious to those who live within the actual experience, especially with regards to an occupying presence. Shunya Yoshini points out how the culture of the American occupation forces became a part of the "mass-cultural scenery of post-war Japan" (2003:438) and this was even more true in areas with an American military presence including Yokosuka and Okinawa. However, as Bestor has indicated, Yoshini also reinforces the observation that America and its accompanying popular culture "appeared not so much as a prohibiting presence but as a seducing presence in the everyday consciousness of the times" (ibid). Mariko's inability to connect her earlier mediated exposure to the 'other' until the death of Elvis seems much more comprehensible when the possibility of a young life lived amid a foreign yet unremarkable cultural presence is taken into account.

⁵ <http://www.japan-guide.com/e/e3400.html> Accessed 26/01/12.

Chika, on the other hand, grew up in a much more overtly occupied area outside Tokyo. Yokosuka is “America's most important naval facility in the Western Pacific, and the largest, most strategically important overseas US Naval installation in the world.”⁶ Perhaps because of her regular encounter with ‘base culture’, Chika expressed ambivalence towards America and American culture in our interviews, stating explicitly that “American popular culture didn’t interest me at all, I don’t know why. It didn’t seem that exciting to me.” She did not expand on this in any more detail and as I am American I felt that she would have been uncomfortable saying anything that could be deemed overly critical of my native country. But Chika’s sentiment is not surprising because as a Yokosuka resident she would have been privy to any resentment or harsh feelings that the base and its personnel may have engendered. As I will outline in Chapter Five, Chika became much more focussed on Britain and what she perceived to be the more lively and subversive popular subcultures which emerged in Manchester and London during the Eighties. However, Chika’s memories of a particular media experience as a ten year old make for an interesting contrast with Mariko’s in that both of these incidents led to an increased awareness of the ‘other’ but through very different mediums. The Osaka Expo in 1975 was the biggest news story that Chika could recall as a child:

I remember this event from my childhood, but mostly because a cousin of mine came around to our house with a video. It wasn’t a video actually it was 8 millimetre film. It was a kind of a home movie. He had been to the Expo and he brought his equipment to my parents’ house (in Yokosuka) to show us the film. I was about nine or ten years old. I thought it was so strange to see all those people walking around in different directions all along the wide pavements. And they didn’t seem to be going anywhere, they were just walking.

At this point she gave a little laugh at the memory, “I thought it was so odd.” Although she did not identify this particular event as a moment of cathartic awareness as Mariko had done, she did remark on how, as a child, she was transfixed by the strangeness of what she was viewing. The ambling and gentle wandering she was

⁶ “Mission and Vision”. <http://www.cnmc.navy.mil/Yokosuka/About/MissionAndVision/index.htm>
Accessed 26/01/12.

watching must have been in direct contrast to the strictly regimented military displays she would have engaged with in her locality such as the Black Ship Festival in nearby Shimoda, an event which celebrates the landing of the American Commodore Perry which forced open trading rights with Japan in 1853.⁷ Chika occasionally introduced this presence into her Japanese lessons, for example using a photo of the heavily embroidered Yokosuka Tiger jacket that was popular with U.S. Forces from the fifties onwards as a learning device for Japanese adjectives. Chika's response to her cousin's film is an example of how a mediated action such as viewing a souvenir film must be understood within the structure and the dynamics of the domestic process of consumption of which it is a part. In Chika's case, it is the implication and the repercussions of the geo-political nature of her home town that is crucial to understanding how a few minutes of grainy footage would have made a memorable difference to her perception of the 'other', not just of the few foreigners but also the almost overwhelming images of people who made up the unknown and the unknowable. Ang (1991) notes that an audience does not just consist of an aggregate of viewers but should be conceived as engaging in the practice of watching television so that decodings must be understood as embedded in the general practice of viewing. This observation prefaces what we all know, that such quotidian procedures can be deceptively complex when they are part of the everyday communication between people who are familiar with each other.

Both Mariko and Chika's experiences with a developing awareness between self and other outside of the daily social context they were familiar with indicates how all media forms can be considered as "products of specific historical practices on the part of identifiable social groups in given conditions" (Wolff 1981:49). These products will inevitably bear the imprint of the ideas, values and conditions of others as part of their production and broadcast, and this will be reflected in the performances they produce, in this case by young Japanese women who went on to live beyond their national borders. As Robertson notes, popular culture comprises social formations that mark and sustain, for an indeterminate period, some distinction among the ubiquitous elements of everyday life (1998:35). These particular qualities serve to mark the media text's popularity and distinctiveness among all other mundane things.

⁷ <http://izu-sakuraya.jp/english/travelinfo/blackshipfestival/> Retrieved 28/01/12.

The result of the increased appreciation of this distinctiveness is that it places value in the foreign (Appiah 2006), but is this at cost to valuing the familiar? One way that families add value to ideas in the home is through family conversation which in this context serves as a metaphor for the engagement with the experience and the ideas of others. I would argue that it is these inherent qualities within the domestic media environment that has enabled these cosmopolitan women to ‘sync’ the concept of self and other with a sense of personal agency. I would also add that media has a role in this particular orientation of the social female self if we consider the experiences of these women as they remember them to be, memories that are loaded with feelings of home and family yet are inseparable from the geo-political repercussions of Japan’s past.

4.3 The Emergent Cosmopolitan II

By her own admission, Yumi’s initial cosmopolitan experiences were somewhat unusual for a Japanese family in the late 1970s. Her father had spent time travelling as a university student. Yumi did not know the details of his travels but she was aware that he had made some lasting friendships on this journey and had also visited parts of Africa. Yumi says her father was “just a civil servant who worked for local government”, but his positive travel experiences led her father to take his young family on holidays to Australia and New Zealand when Yumi was ten and the west coast of America, Canada and Alaska by the time Yumi was twelve:

...When Japanese families go abroad they go to popular holiday destinations like Hawaii – not Australia and New Zealand! My dad had friends in Australia and New Zealand so we went there...When he was a student (in university) he went on this big boat and went to different countries like Australia and even places in Africa and met a lot of people that way and that was a big influence. He has always been interested in something, [such as] different cultures. It was just something he liked doing.

These experiences resulted in Yumi's request for English lessons when she was ten,⁸ just after the family trip to New Zealand, which was in part influenced by the frustration she saw her mother experience on these trips. Although her father would have booked air tickets, the hotel accommodations were always left until they arrived at the destination. This would mean that Yumi's mother would have to wait with the two girls for hours on end while her father worked very hard with his own limited English in order to finalise the details of their stay. Yumi also recalls her mother becoming quite frustrated over her dad's constant wandering off during these trips. It was after the American trip that her mother became proactive:

My mum starting learning English too, because she used to hate being left when we travelled. My dad would go off taking pictures, he would get lost just taking loads and loads of pictures and she would just be left there waiting and she hated it, not being able to do anything without him, so she started learning English as well. She still goes to English language school classes.

Yumi's younger sister has also developed a sense of wanderlust and she has forfeited a high paying salary for working short term contracts as a software designer which allows her to visit places of interest:

I have a younger sister in Japan, she just turned forty this August (2010). She's single, she likes travelling. I don't do much travelling, but she does lots! When she first got a permanent job, she wanted to go on holiday and she hated working long hours. She designs software, so she was getting paid a lot of money but she resented working such long hours so she left. She is now working on short term contracts, six or eight months at a time, then she goes on holiday for a month. She travels mainly to developing countries, like places in Asia and Africa because it's cheaper and because, well, being in Tokyo is similar to being in someplace like Manchester, but someplace like Vietnam is very different.

⁸ Yumi's decision to learn English and the life processes this engendered is discussed in further detail in Chapter Six.

Recent population movements can lay claim to beginning to break down mental identification between nation and culture which was also supposed to exist in classical accounts of nationalism and the modern nation state whereby the challenge is to negotiate a place in the host culture (Cunningham and Sinclair 2001). Delanty (2000) notes that since the 1990s the city as a social space is no longer shaped by nationally specific cultures and that there is a de-coupling between nation and city that is brought about by the processes of modernity and in some ways Yumi's comparison between Manchester and Tokyo stands on that threshold. They are manageable and liveable because of the similarity of the urban space, not necessarily because each city represents a particular national social practice. Yumi has remarked that her mother enjoys coming to visit her in Manchester because she now has enough ability in English to move around and enjoy her day comfortably while Yumi is at work. The other factor that increases her pleasure is that she finds that Manchester is not all that different to Tokyo.

In terms of her day to day media use as a child, Yumi mentioned having her television viewing time restricted by her parents who did not entirely approve of the practice⁹ and she was embarrassed by the small size of her family's television in Tokyo compared to the larger screens at her friends' homes. Despite the prevailing parental attitude, Yumi recalls watching the popular imported American television programmes *I Love Lucy* and *The Bionic Woman* (*Bionic Jenny* was the Japanese title) along with Japanese programmes such as the very popular children's programme *Hachijidayo Zen'inshugo!*¹⁰ as a child in Tokyo. She was also fascinated by crime programmes and this is a television interest that she continues to pursue here in the UK through programmes such as *Dexter* and the various *CSI* franchises. Despite experiencing what she felt was a curtailed televisual experience compared to her peer group, Yumi's early cosmopolitan encounters were tangible and deeply symbolic

⁹ Her mother would make the disparaging comment: *Terebi wa kyōiku-jō yoku arimasen. Terebi no saizu to IQ wa hanpirei shimasu.* Translation: TV is not a proper education. And IQ is inversely proportional to the size of the TV.

¹⁰ *Hachijidayo Zen'inshugo!* translates as "It's Eight O'Clock! Let's go Everyone!" According to my interlocutors this was a variety type programme with slapstick comedy sketches. It ran from 1969 until 1985 according to this Portuguese blog post <http://mundo-oriental.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/hachiji-dayo-zenin-shugo.html> Retrieved 06/02/12.

experiences which, it could be argued, enriched her imagination in a more immediate manner.

The above narratives serve to identify how a part of the historic process of becoming can be articulated through a discourse of cosmopolitanism. What is most significant about these accounts is how they illustrate how Mariko, Chika and Yumi were entangled within the processes of change that came to shape the particular time and place that these women grew up in. I believe that it was necessary to specify and investigate the practical techniques that give a historical grounding to the constituted self. What is important to note is that hand-in-hand with practices outlined above is not the history of the self per se but an understanding of the relations in the home that led to the individual practices that the interlocutors internalised and that were relocated when they came to the UK. From my understanding of Foucault, it is essential to the understanding of identity to comprehend how humans are subject to a multitude of heterogeneous processes and practices by which we come to relate to ourselves as limited or permitted, by the regimes of authority and of power, in which the individual finds itself (1980; Dreyfus and Rabinow 1982). It is also evident from these accounts how one such process, the spatial discourse of *uchi/soto* becomes blurred at the micro level of the home through such practice. Mariko and Chika both had an awareness-raising encounter with ‘the other’ within the confines of the familiar home environment, despite the overt presence of ‘the other’ that existed outside the domestic environment, or *soto*. Yumi’s narrative presents an inversion of this, whereby the core or heart of the Japanese family unit consisting of mother and children (cf. Nakane 1970; Lebra 1984) was positioned outside of the home (*uchi*) and was compelled to encounter the other in situ, within the context of *soto*.

Bachnik notes that the situational rubric of these two paired terms extends beyond simple directional coordinates in that the terms are explicitly linked to “culturally defined perspectives for self, society and language” (1994:7). Yet within these narratives there is evidence that my interlocutors’ self-awareness was flexible enough to shift with different modes of experience that were contingent on different modes of “self-other interaction on the one hand and the symbolic processing of information on the other” (Lebra 1992:105). What this flexibility of self-awareness implies, and is supported by the narratives, is that the discourse of *uchi/soto* is in practice an

adaptable framework that is informed and adjusted according to experience (Bachnik and Quinn 1994).

4.4 Cosmopolitan Space, Place and Practice

As we sat in the basement wine bar that Wakako had chosen for our meetings, our discussions turned to the early mediated memories from their childhood. Wakako recalled that her earliest memory of a news story that sparked her interest as a child was the arrival of the fashion sensation Twiggy in Tokyo in November 1967 when she was nine. She enthusiastically recalled the hype surrounding this event:

My parents took the *Yomiuri* and Tokyo broadsheets. They were delivered home twice a day and I received *Junior Yomiuri* in English. I didn't read the papers properly because the magazines were more interesting to me. My parents allowed me to have home subscriptions to these magazines called "Cinema" and "Music Life" because they were good for studying English. Actually they were stories from American magazines translated into Japanese, but they were interesting to me for the interviews of American and British musicians and actors. But before that, when I was a child, I remember when Twiggy the model came to Tokyo. All the papers were saying she was as thin as the branch of a tree! And she was! It was a massive news story when she came to Tokyo.

Wakako then continued with this recollection that a couple years after Twiggy's sensational appearance in Tokyo there was another news story that outlined the shocking popularity of the Barbie doll in Japan and how these were sold out at toy shops up and down the country, triggering long queues and protesting consumers:

I was thinking that maybe this is what started my interest in fashion as a child, because it was about this time that I started to collect Barbie dolls...And a few years later there was another big story about how Barbie dolls had sold out in Tokyo and the rest of the country but by then I had them all!

Not only did Wakako's adult satisfaction at acquiring her Barbies before the shortage produce a smile from the other women present, it also triggered a conversation about

that most cosmopolitan of women in the late twentieth century, the airline hostess. There was a moment's pause after Wakako had finished speaking and I was pondering whom to ask next about their earliest memory of a news story and whether I could maintain a focussed discussion when suddenly Eiko piped up, "I remember airline hostesses! They seemed so beautiful and so glamorous. And they could speak English." There was a murmur of agreement at the table. They all agreed that the air hostess of the past was a persona of admiration for them. Kazuko mentioned that "they looked so smart in their uniforms in the magazines, and their make-up was always perfect. They were someone that you could respect." Wakako then interjected that this was a far cry from today's air hostess, "...but you don't think that about them if you travel with EasyJet! Some of them look so messy". The discussion ended with Kimiko summing up their appeal as, "they could speak English. I never thought that someday I would be able to speak English too." The air hostess presented an extremely gendered image of an elite vocation, something that not all women were suited to, or much less capable of, back when these women were young. As an embodiment of an ideal gendered performance (Butler 1990), the air hostess was, quite literally, the stuff of dreams. However as Wakako pointed out, this particular role model has become more workaday and much less elitist. The same could be said for the modern tendency towards transnationalism.

Wakako's recollection is an affirmation that women are more susceptible to cosmopolitan tendencies because of their specifically gendered orientation as consumers for the home and family and this is especially true in the Japanese context (Skov and Moeran 1995). As a result there is a heightened sensitivity towards the status of such goods. This is supported by Nava's assertion that cosmopolitanism is a particularly gendered frame of mind and as such is not only visceral and vernacular but also domestic. She observes that the trope of the domestic refers to both the imagination and to the more material aspects of urban geopolitics:

It signals a cosmopolitanism that takes place *at home*, in the family, in the neighbourhood, in the interior territories of the mind and body. As such it suggests a structure of meaning that exists independently of travel to foreign countries or knowledge of foreign languages...this is a cosmopolitanism that

has historically emerged from engagement with otherness and elsewhere in local zones – the ‘micro publics’- of the modern global city... (2007:12).

The implication is that contact with otherness through the more intimate venues that constitute the ‘micro public’ such as the street, the shopping centre, the school, function in the same way as the intimate yet mediated form of broadcast television and other media and this is reinforced through the experiences that my informants outlined. Cumulatively, these forms are generated in the familiar domestic space of the living room, a space that reflected the increasing deterritorialisation of the globe by normalising difference in the spheres of music, fashion, even politics (Hebdige 1990). There are multiple forms of mobility that expand people’s awareness of the world around them and their capacity for making informed (or imagined?) comparisons. And the shift to a cosmopolitan relationship with place means that people increasingly inhabit the spaces identified as home from a distance.

In Chester, Yumiko expressed an interest in Science Fiction as a child and used to watch the original series of *Star Trek* at her home in Akita in the Tohoku area, but not the popular *Hachijidayo Zen’inshugo!* as this was not broadcast to her region:

There was one famous Japanese comedy...Me: Was it *Hachijidayo*? Yumiko: That one, because I couldn’t watch the most popular comedy when I was little, because we didn’t have that channel. It was like not being able to watch ITV and Channel 5 here. So we couldn’t watch it. So I think we knew about it from hearing other people talk about it. So we didn’t watch *Hachiji*, sadly. So I think I watched...all the other programmes, like the torturing games! Those were quite popular in Japan, about twenty years ago. We didn’t have much channel(s) [sic]. Kid’s animation, that only arrived for one hour before dinner.

Yumiko’s limited television experience in Akita can be compared with Wakako’s familiarity with the wider range of children’s programming available in Tokyo ten years earlier, which meant that she was outside the target age range for *Hachijidayo*. Wakako was an avid viewer of “all the children’s programmes from 5pm to 8pm from Monday to Sunday”, and while this televisual buffet included the ubiquitous *Okusama no Majo* (*Bewitched*) and *The Lucy Show*, Wakako reeled off the following

contributions, “*Ultraman* series, *Astro Boy*, *Sazae-san*, *Ohayo Kodomo Show*, *Ping Pong Pang*, and much more. I watched all the animations.”

Yumiko also expressly noted that she enjoyed watching *Little House on the Prairie* because “I fancied the father!”, the actor Michael Landon who played the father Charles Ingalls, an admission that introduces a romantic reading to a programme that NHK describes as portraying the “patriarchal system that prevailed in those pioneering days” for Japanese viewers.¹¹ Asan, who grew up in Tokyo, also introduced a romantic reading into her childhood viewing, citing:

When I was little, *Ōkami Shōnen Ken*, which is a jungle boy type story, about a boy that was raised by a wolf family, and he became a Tarzan type hero. He was an outsider type, and I was in love with him! He was a wolf! And then there was *One-Eyed Jack*, he was an outsider type as well...And there was *Gatchaman*, it was sort of like Power Rangers, basically. And again, in that programme there was a character named Joe, that was the same sort as the *One-Eyed Jack*. A bit cool, a bit naughty, and again, I was in love with him too.

The “One-Eyed Jack” of Asan’s fantasy was Osamu Tezuka’s *Black Jack*, a *manga* and then animated series about a one-eyed brilliant yet maverick back-alley surgeon who saved those according to his own personal ethic. He was a dashing animated character, dressed in black with a cape and black and white two-toned hair. The multiple scars on his face only added to his allure. Asan added that she felt that her tastes in animations were somewhat unusual for a young adolescent girl because she identified more as “a kind-of tomboy.” Although her father would dictate what to watch on television when he was home, Asan remarked that “fortunately when I was little my father didn’t stay at home much, especially in the evenings. It was the era of the Japanese economy expanding and every Japanese man was working late so my father didn’t come home until 11pm, so we could stay up watching those cartoons.” The circumventing of patriarchal authority at home offered Asan and her two older brothers the opportunity to engage with a wider variety of children’s television than

¹¹ “Fifty Years of NHK Television”
http://www.nhk.or.jp/digitalmuseum/nhk50years_en/categories/p53/index.html Retrieved 08/02/12.

they would have otherwise. Asan added that at these times it was her older brothers who determined the viewing material but that it was lucky that she liked the same cartoons anyway. While Kelsky (2006) limits her analysis of Japanese women moving to the West to the erotic obsession with the Western male, both Asan and Yumiko cited an early child's attraction to a different kind of 'other' in a way that suggests that perhaps some kind of romantic template had been established. Both Charles Ingalls and *Black Jack* (and I would venture to include *Ōkami Shōnen Ken* and Joe) are characters who represent a particular morality and uphold this morality in the face of adversity. Of course they are both rather dashing in the process to boot, whether they are drawn or cast that way. The romantic fantasy component can be seen to be a very effective means of introducing an element of destabilisation into the normative tropes of Japanese society.

The interest expressed by Yumiko, Wakako and Asan in science fiction and the super hero/robot type of animations is worth noting in terms of how these programmes are representations of fantastical or magical rescue as opposed to tales of heroism (Gill 1998). In fact when I asked Wakako why she liked this particular type of animation she replied that it was the "fantasy world where anything could happen." This quality has been noted by Susan J. Napier, who states that, "Anime offers an exhilarating vision of difference in which identity can be technological, mythological, or simply an ecstatic process of constant metamorphosis. To some viewers, such an array of possibilities can be threatening, but to others, they can be liberating sites of play" (2001:236). Although she was writing about anime specifically, it is not much of a stretch to understand how this same quality extends to science fiction as a genre as well.

4.5 Which Cosmopolitanism?

Beck (2006) notes that the spaces of our emotional imagination have expanded in a transnational sense as a result of the wide variety of images (and I would include the context in which those images are consumed), that are available to populations across the globe 24/7. He refers to a process of latent cosmopolitanisation, which occurs inadvertently and almost accidentally through exposure to other ways of life, people etc often through media depictions (ibid). I am suggesting that cosmopolitanism can be understood as a sentiment linked to the motivations of self that drives

transnationalism. What this process suggests is that a person is able to exert a strategic manipulation of their resources, that is, of their cultural capital, which in turn translates into the latent cosmopolitanism as outlined by Beck, in order to become the person they see themselves as.

In this vein, the cosmopolitanism that I am referencing here seems to have appeared as a kind of accidental personal orientation in that the women I spoke to came to enact the move to another country as a means of realising a drive towards personal fulfilment. This experience differs from Werbner's (2008) vernacular cosmopolitanism in that the Japanese women I spoke to are clearly rooted in Japan yet are engaging with British lifestyles and values. They have a more nuanced cosmopolitan perspective but they remain rooted within the social relationships that are intrinsic to the domestic sphere and this does not alter with employment or career. For example, Chika continues to indulge her cosmopolitan interest in travel and often uses her experiences abroad as useful teaching tools in the classroom. Her mother would travel from Japan to visit her and these visits would form the opportunity to explore new places together as a mother and daughter duo. While I was attending classes with Chika, two such examples took place; the first was a trip to Iceland and the second was a trip to Spain to visit the home of Pablo Picasso. Both these trips gave Chika plenty of material to support her Japanese language teaching. In addition, these classes served to introduce the students into her personal life, implicating us into the periphery of Chika's network of personal relationships. Her mother would reinforce the bonds of familiarity that had been established by sending the students New Year's charms from Japan. Wakako is also an enthusiastic and intrepid traveller and her husband N is similarly oriented. Together they spent Wakako's fiftieth birthday travelling through China for three weeks. She is also in charge of organising their trips abroad at Christmas time and these trips are planned in order to accommodate her elderly mother-in-law.

Mariko also spoke of a cosmopolitan longing to visit new places and as a newly single woman would talk about her desire to move away from Britain once her children were of age. Not necessarily back to Japan, although this was often mooted as a life possibility but rather to Thailand. Mariko would speak wistfully about earning a decent living wage (for Thailand) as a Japanese language teacher and having the

respect of her students – something that she felt was missing in the British students and their parents that she encountered. The motif for this longing for Thailand was the imagined mango tree that would be growing in her imaginary courtyard, “I could just reach out of my window and grab a juicy ripe mango.” More pragmatically, Mariko would also describe the various places she would like to experience one day and these places were linked to her position within various social networks, such as visiting Los Angeles where I am from, and going to see the albatross in New Zealand, where an old friend from Hiroshima was living with her partner. Vernacular cosmopolitanism is particular to a place but does not speak to the various life shaping experiences that constitute differing attitudes to the other, whereas Beck’s latent cosmopolitanisation is an inadvertent, almost accidental perspective. He identifies this reality shaping quality as inherently unconscious and passive and links it to the consequences of global market decisions (2004). Rosenberger (1994) first noted this perspective in Japanese women by identifying the reinterpretation and assimilation of media messages as forming the basis for the contestation of the normative social order. This is a privilege that is limited to women of higher socio-economic means who can support the more cosmopolitan hobbies and pleasures that allow them to assume different lifestyles to those women who are caught in lower socio-economic levels.

The cosmopolitan perspective may have been taken into account as the ultimate alternative solution to a potentially less than fulfilling adult life in Japan because of their personal circumstances, as in the case of Yumiko who states that when she came to the UK in order to pursue the opportunity of a permanent relationship with her English partner it was with the understanding that this would be a last chance attempt to create a life for herself, albeit a life that took her away from Japan. When I asked if her parents had approved of her decision to move to Britain, Yumiko replied:

They were quite...not against [the idea], but they were quite concerned. I wasn’t very young, I was 34, so they said that if you go, there is no return. They kept asking me, are you sure? My mum reminded me, you are not so young, especially as Akita [where Yumiko is from originally] is mostly countryside, you have to marry in your early 20’s, or else you are stuck [without a long-term relationship]. It was a big decision, but well, I thought, ok, try and see how we get on, if not I will go home.

Despite what sounds like a less than enthusiastic reply, her parents were both very supportive of her move to the UK and her mother was only expressing her feelings of anxiety for her daughter's future. The women I interviewed were equally divided in number between those who came to Britain to improve their job or career prospects and those who accompanied a spouse, yet it is possible to link this change with a desire to alter their environment or perspective, or to enable a change in world view with the intention of fulfilling their own individual and particular sense of personhood. Mariko's experience is slightly different in that she came to the UK as a newlywed, but any connotations of the wide eyed innocent abroad are misleading because she was already working as a recording artist with Warner Music Japan and had travelled twice outside of Japan to New York for short visits in order to shoot a music video. Despite the various reasons that my informants may have given for leaving Japan, what they have in common is that they have expressed an informed shift in their relationship with space that allows them to identify new places as home (Cunningham and Sinclair 2001). In addition to the social and cultural change these women would have been prepared to experience, they would have also carried with them the innate understanding that living outside of Japan for any extended period of time would remove them from mainstream Japanese society not just physically but also categorically, thus marginalising them (and that of any potential mixed race children) and placing them in the periphery of the social categories they may have once participated in (Valentine 1990). The expectation or presumption of marginality reflects the inherent disjuncture in this vernacular cosmopolitanism (Werbner 2008) which moves the practice of cosmopolitanism to a conviction of cosmopolitanism in which the personal affiliations with the nation state are blurred and rendered less important to the individual (Beck *ibid*).

I am not implying a retreat into essentialised identities with the suggestion of the individual lived practices of my Japanese informants but to identify the cosmopolitan as a product of creativity and communication in the context of diversity (Werbner *ibid*). Because of this consideration I would like to reframe the use of some of the terminology that is currently in place within the anthropologic discipline that is commonly used to consider the processes of orienting the self to non-native structures of meaning. The usual language that is employed to characterise the process is invariably saturated with connotations not just of potential confusion but also inner

turmoil and latent psychosis. Loaded words such as contestation or disjuncture or displacement seem unhelpful and unnatural in describing the processes of agency and identity formation of my informants, processes that surely owe more to the ability of the multicultural individual to negotiate and merge the self within or even outside new or unfamiliar cultural ground. In fact, may make better analytical sense to think of these processes of cosmopolitan identity formation as a form of negotiation, as suggested by de Leeuw and Rydin, who state that “it is the processes of negotiation that we find crucial in the lives of people who are in a situation of cultural change” (2007:177). This observation hints that there may be new value in seeing oneself as different and using this difference to initiate something new.

What this suggests is a more productive subjectivity for the diasporic cosmopolitan than is acknowledged in post-colonial theory (Canclini 1995). Hall noted “people are increasingly headed towards a more cosmopolitan way of living, of understanding themselves in this way and of appreciating their insertion into the outside world” (2002:27). These observations point towards a cosmopolitan experience that is fertile ground for the positioning and repositioning of the self. This is a subjectivity that is not intrinsically oppressive but enables the diasporic to derive a sense of creative joy and dignity from their belonging to one location and identification with a homeland that is in Japan (Ang 2001). My interlocutors are making the most of their complex and flexible positioning as Japanese women in the UK. I am not trying to deny that contestation does exist within the cosmopolitan’s life experience but I feel at this point that this may be more evidently expressed externally through lived practices and how the actor places herself within either her native setting or within the adopted culture (this quality became more apparent after the Tohoku Earthquake and is discussed in Chapter Eight).

I would like to emphasise that I am restricting this framework to a principle of accord within the individual herself. This approach would help to resolve the prospect of cultural contestation that begins with the presupposed duality of foreign/domestic or national/international that have been rendered ambiguous by modernity (Beck and Sznaider 2006). By exploring this analogy further, we can think of the actor or protagonist as the hub, with several external influences entering that may require different resolutions or strategies in order to satisfactorily negotiate with the internal

core of the individual. Although Kondo also reiterates the perception of the self as a “mobile site of contradictions and disunity” she also identifies this mobile site as a “node where various discourses temporarily interact in particular ways” (1997:47). This latter observation clearly supports a potentially different reading of the self as an entity that is able to harmonise the multiple discourses that provide a working framework of intelligibility and interpretability associated with a successful cosmopolitan experience.

4.6 Television for the Japanese Self

The key element in the above accounts is that these women were all participating in quotidian mediated experiences as young children within the home, surrounded by the components of a cultural and social specificity that continually serve to create and recreate the cultural heritage of being Japanese. At the same time they are connecting with mediated situations and environments that express a difference from being Japanese. Inevitably and indirectly the family and its extended network are all implicit in the creation of imagined transnational spaces in the home through the conspicuous consumption of mediated material. The home environment gives a secure base from which these women could have potentially explored an awareness of the other that was first triggered by an encounter with media. This quality is further reinforced within the ethos of the broadcast arena itself, in that what seems to set Japan apart from her Western mediated counterparts is an overall social willingness to co-opt popular culture on a national scale and to recognize its significance in the lived practices of the people (Powers et al. 1989). The development of the performing arts and entertainment for the public emerged out of Buddhist prayer and ritual which evolved into a symbolic representation of the community that reflected the prevailing values, and both the ruling classes and the merchants of the Tokugawa era (1603-1868) became enthusiastic patrons of artists and artistic endeavour (ibid).

The evolution of the television industry in Japan has coincided with several events in modern Japanese social history that have resulted in changes in broadcast and accessibility within the industry as a whole. The first of these was the establishment of remote broadcasting which was motivated by the crown prince’s departure from Yokohama Harbour in 1959 to attend Queen Elizabeth’s coronation ceremony. But the one event which marked a drastic change in broadcasting was the October 1964

Games of the Tokyo Olympics. Not only was this an opportunity to show the rest of the world the success of Japan's post-war economic and political development but it also initiated a construction boom in Japan (not just Tokyo) which included the building of the *shinkansen* (high speed rail service), new expressways and public buildings. In what was meant to be a celebratory occasion, the first satellite relay broadcast between Japan and the US was instead of the untimely assassination of President Kennedy. But these were not the only advancements initiated by the Olympics, as the domestic sales of television sets skyrocketed, including the latest modern gadget, the colour television (Stronach 1989). There is a tendency to assimilate the concept of popular culture as a national concern that has resulted in Japanese popular culture achieving a closeness to the ordinary, everyday lives of the audience (Craig 2000) and it is even more likely that this would have been the case in the sixties and seventies when the viewing options for the family were limited and limiting by today's standards. This is an observation reinforced by Painter, whose time spent in an Osaka television studio has suggested that the most popular Japanese TV programmes work to establish a sense of quasi intimate interaction between those on screen and the viewers at home (1996a). Clearly this pattern of what he identifies as "televisual quasi-intimacy" makes sense in a society where interpersonal relationships are shaped by culturally determined factor such as formality, politeness and the maintenance of group boundaries (ibid:171). Painter also notes that the particularly Japanese themes that may be depicted in programmes (such as obligation and reciprocity) are not necessarily ideological but serve as a rubric for orienting the self in the social world. And yet there is no guarantee that these representations will be analysed and interpreted in the way the producers intended (1996b:70).

But is a child's subjective position to such material clear to herself? It may be impossible to discern to what degree the child's subjectivity is the result of her own agency and how much is absorbed from the reactions of parents and other adults in the room at the same time. The indigenous structure of the Japanese household, or *ie*, should be taken into account at this juncture. Historically, the *ie* was seen not so much as a collection of individuals but as a cohesive entity whose sole purpose was the continuity of the family lineage and the maintenance of the hierarchical boundaries of age, gender and status (Benedict 1946, Lebra 1984). But as with most traditional institutions the framework of the *ie* underwent a reformation during the Meiji period

(1868-1912) of Japanese modernisation. These laws were further modified during the Allied Occupation and the nuclear family (based on the Western model) was now recognised as the essential social organisation of the post war nation. However, as Hendry points out, the traditional notion of the *ie* and its underlying principles of lineage continuity are still in circulation in many parts of Japan (1987). Yet White (2002) is at pains to point out, as Hamabata (1990) does, that the normative ideal has never been part of everyone's lives. According to White, the traditional *ie* has now been prescribed by state interests to become a "productive and reproductive middle class family, able to manage the care of its own dependents across generations but operating smoothly as a nuclear family with a clear division of labour between husband and wife, at least during some of its life course" (ibid:11). And yet within this modern framework for the Japanese family the messy reality of life impinges on the ideal in the form of, for example, divorced and single parent families. What has remained consistent over time, however, has been the role of the family in the socialisation of its constituent members. In the media-oriented family home of the post-war era this would have included novel family practices that to some degree or another would have supported the use of the television as an agent of socialisation. The national television station NHK had begun broadcasting children's programming for day care centres and kindergartens in 1956.¹² These educational broadcasts and publications were initiated on a national scale so that mothers would themselves be socialised in the appropriate way to socialise their children and these elements serve as a strong force for a homogenous approach throughout the country (Hendry 1986). This is not to imply that children's television in Japan was a deculturised or a culturally neutral space, in fact the opposite is true. It is because television viewing is so culturised that what is viewed is consumed by the family audience as something commonplace and unexceptional (Buonanno 2008).

Indeed, there are much more predominant social markers of self identity that are provided for children to become aware of themselves as members of Japanese society such as a culturally determined cuisine (Ohnuki-Tierney 1993), rules of behaviour (Hendry 1986) and language (Bachnik and Quinn 1994). So when the child viewer is confronted by these images or impressions of otherness from external mediated

¹² Kodaira, S.I. "Children's Television: Trends Around the World"
http://www.nhk.or.jp/bunken/english/reports/pdf/05_no4_07.pdf Accessed 09/02/12.

sources, especially if they seem to be speaking Japanese as expected from a television program broadcast into a Japanese home, then it is not surprising that such images and perceptions are consumed unremarkably by the child participant, especially if viewed within the context of the strongest identity maker of self that he or she knows – the family home. It seems logical, then, that these concepts of the other become part of the child's internal mindscape and as such are internalised, or negotiated, as part of a complete or holistic world view for the child that ultimately serves to fuel the adult subjectivity.

We must acknowledge that ideas of what constitutes success and happiness are constituted within a public/political discourse and are subject to a “normalising” rationality (Haber 1994). This corresponds to an understanding that the images that circulate in a culture set the boundaries (or limitations, perhaps) for our understanding of the possible kinds of lives we can lead (ibid). By invoking the philosophical context as put forward by Foucault, we can extrapolate that if knowledge is seen as a function of power, then it is impossible to formulate real choices about our lives unless those images are brought out of the private and made public and are made part of dominant public discourse. From this position it is possible to distinguish that the media practice which emerges from our private lives must be seen as having been constituted at a particular moment in history for particular purposes, and have effects that go beyond an individual's idiosyncratic vision. This precept can be seen to be part of the inherent driving principles of cosmopolitanism.

Despite the academic disregard these so-called banal narratives and images are often held in, they seem to be part of a process which creates meaningful resonance in its participants and serve to feed the cosmopolitan imagination in powerful enough ways that translate into an individual trajectory of movement. They deliver the desire to experience the other, to live life among them at the very personal cost of altering their own personal and social sense of self. (Some elements of the collective network are sometimes re-established once they have moved to the UK, by discovering pre-established networks of Japanese women and embedding themselves into pre-existing networks of personal relationships, but I will explore this in a later chapter). The assumed triviality of the media output in Japan in the seventies which included the programs cited by my participants such as *Little House on the Prairie* and *Bionic*

Jenny should not be overlooked as a means of establishing a common ground or a habitus of shared visuals that fires up the cosmopolitan imagination with shared conversations with family and friends, thus normalising the exotic or foreign into something comfortable by its quotidian nature.

4.7 Conclusion

It would be much more convenient if I could make an exclusive claim for the power of the simple audio-visual image to fire up the desire to know the other and to live one's life in a foreign place, but this is simply not the case. The agency and intrepidity that mutates itself into a tangible effort at relocation has many roots and it may be possible to appreciate how the development of this cosmopolitan awareness becomes evident within the recollections of the interviewees. Each of these women began a gradual awakening of the cosmopolitan self within the confines of the home, but the starting point of this process is unique to each individual that I interviewed. I have suggested that it is the breaching of the Japanese discourse of *uchi* and *soto* (inside and outside) that may have initiated an awareness and an appreciation for the other through media use. While direct media practice might not have been the original trigger for this awareness between self and other, there are mediated components that became integral to the process. The overriding indication is that the development of self-reflexivity is simultaneously stimulated and reinforced through the engagements with media activities. Anthropology has often been more interested in the ways that familialism can be socially exclusionary by building borders of class and ethnicity. What I have tried to do here is recast the family as a social unit and space that can work to create cosmopolitanism in many senses of the word.

These women have forged a hybrid yet negotiated identity that does not exclude or deny Japan or the Japanese element of themselves in exchange for an essentialised Western identity. They are very clearly and explicitly Japanese women in Britain. This life lived outside of Japan offers women the opportunity to provide a first hand critique of the limitations of gender relations in Japan. While they were aware of these gendered shortcomings as natives, they are now able to comment on this state of affairs as external observers. Whereas Kelsky (2001) frames her informants as actively engaged in a rhetorical trope that contrasts a traditional Japan with a modern West, an engagement that results in a project to remake Japan in the West's image, I

think that it may be more appropriate to conceive of their lives as Japanese women who clearly delineate themselves as non-Western women who are not from the West. The gendering of the cosmopolitan experience is highlighted by the almost non-existence of Japanese men who travel outside of Japan in search of an embodied Western-style life, complete with Western partner. (ibid: 8).

Social analysts such as Giddens (1999), Hannerz (1996) and Appadurai (1996) may have brought their considerable insight in order to deconstruct the social changes brought about by a new post-modern global reality but it seems that the observations these intellectual heavyweights came to identify and theorise about had already taken hold inside the bodies and minds of many young Japanese women in the 1960s and 1970s. As Hebdige notes “the values and meanings attached to place and homeland remain as charged as ever but the networks in which people are caught up in extend far beyond the neighbourhoods they are physically located in or the alliances to which they are consciously committed” (1990:20). We are now living in a world where mundane cosmopolitanism is part of ordinary experience.

Chapter Five: Popular Culture: Text and Context

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will examine how British popular culture was and is embodied as practice through my interlocutors' past and present articulation of forms, language and location. I focus on the narratives of two women, Asan and Yumi, who both provided very different life trajectories that resulted in their current lives in Britain. Through their narratives, my interlocutors gave examples of how the self is made and remade, first as Japanese female adolescents and then as adult women who have relocated to the UK (Butler 1990). By clarifying the role of media within this particular process of becoming and being it is possible to understand how the self develops as a product of multiple narratives in a manner that emphasises the nature of the self to be open-ended and prone to changes and modifications (Haber 1994). The lived media practices that the women I interviewed spoke of, and the changes in locality that they associated with as a result of these practices, reflect how these individuals were able to shift their self-making social practices to non-Japanese articulations. I consider these practices to be media events that are imbedded within the individual's broad social and historical contexts. It is therefore possible to trace how the individual responds to various forms of media and how these responses are embodied within the imagined self and in turn realised through expressions of agency. When we consider these media practices as learned processes that exist within an individual's personal biographical context we can begin to understand how these practices coalesce within a particular diasporic community to produce particular yet vivid results. This would indicate that the cultural components and texts that are utilised by the social subject are doubly articulated and integrated into the strategies of the mobile self. However this does not imply that my informants have chosen to live in their new residential environments operating as singularly lone social entities. As indicated in the previous chapters, Japanese women in the UK are entwined by and identify with social networks of their own making, along with the help of other Japanese women whom they may encounter in the process of "being here". These narratives also indicate the richness and diversity of the social networks that both Asan and Yumi were able to wrap around themselves in ways that enabled, supported and in other ways made it possible for them to have meaningful lives in Britain.

In order to open up this particular analysis into the role of popular culture within the shaping of self, I am incorporating Mathews' delineation of how three distinct levels can be discerned in the formation of the Japanese self (Mathews 1996). His theoretical outline will serve to give an understanding of how private motivations give impetus to the desire to relocate from Japan to somewhere outside of the native land. For Mathews, the individual's key motivation for personal cultivation lies in developing one's *ikigai*, or "that which makes life worth living, most often expressed as family, life or *personal dream*" (ibid:718, my emphasis). He offers a suggestion as to how the Japanese self incorporates sociocultural elements within society both unconsciously and consciously, firstly at the level of a deep self that is unaware that it is being shaped by external factors, a second level that indicates the self is aware of external shaping but cannot help it, and a third level at which the self specifically chooses which external elements to incorporate and embody. Mathews' categorisation is useful within the context of this research as it values the kinds of media-based choices my informants make in their daily lives, however, these categories must be problematised if they are to be of practical use.

Within the groupings that Mathews has outlined, there seems to be much leeway for the blurring between levels one and three. If, as he states, there is unconscious moulding of self from language and the social practices of habitus, and a more shallow, superficial moulding derived from media texts then where does that leave embodied media practices? I expect he would say in the third category, but media use and practice is so entwined with language and habitus that I would argue that such a categorisation is meaningless with regard to media in the discussion of self formation. The actionable self has to have a cache of life options that are consciously rooted into the self via the unconscious processes of language and habitus. To relegate these choices to supermarket self status, as Mathews does, is to imply a metaphorical category that is analogous to going to Sainsbury's. This metaphor does not seem to correspond to Mathew's informants, who speak of their *ikigai* as deeply rooted choices that once decided upon they seem almost powerless to rise up against.

As a means of providing contrasting examples of life outcomes I will focus on the stories of Asan and Yumi, who both arrived in the UK with differing life plans, yet

both women had been motivated by very specific forms of popular culture that served to inspire a particular social self. What is suggested here is that media practices serve in part to augment the range of life choices available for these women. When the initial interest into Western popular culture that they developed as teens was played through an already existing cosmopolitan imagination and mixed with the cultural capital that resulted from both their differing yet solidly middle class upbringing in Japan, what emerged in both cases was a Japanese woman who acknowledged herself to be sufficiently endowed with material, cultural and social resiliency to initiate the move to Britain. There is sufficient context contained in these narratives to regard the pursuit of an individual's *ikigai* as a socially determined technology of the self in that it exists within the Japanese context as a means of "transforming the self in order to attain a certain level of happiness" (Foucault 1988:18).

5.2 The Importance of Place

The train journey from London to Marple, where Yumi currently resides, is a contrast in changing landscapes, from the industrial landscapes of Manchester through the glimpses of the red roofs of the rows of terraced housing until this in turn changes into the trees and greenery of the Manchester suburbs. For this, our final interview in July 2011, I had left a grey and humid London and re-emerged in the unexpectedly warm and sunny Marple. Yumi met me at the train station, on foot this time as we had decided to spend our interview over lunch at the nearest pub. As it was one of the finest first days of summer we decided to situate ourselves in the outdoor terrace, making sure that we sat at a table with a large umbrella to protect ourselves from the intense and potentially harmful rays. I sat down to our interview with a sandwich and a glass of juice, feeling very self conscious as Yumi had only chosen a glass of water for refreshment despite what I had understood to be a mutual agreement to meet for lunch. She began the conversation by commenting on the recent Royal Wedding of William and Kate. She asked if I had seen Marple on the television as the village had hosted Britain's largest street party for the wedding. I had not, and when I asked her if she had attended, I was surprised that she hadn't. "Oh no, I didn't go. I am a total republican. Can't stand the Royal Family! J [her husband] said I shouldn't complain though because I got the day off. I said that I would be working from home, but I didn't really!" Yumi had introduced the topic with a note of reasonable enthusiasm so I was taken aback that she was such a firm anti-royalist. When I asked her what she

didn't like about the Royal Family she said "I just don't think that they should be supported by public tax money. They should go and get jobs like everyone else! Then the government can use that money for improving schools and hospitals, you know, things that are important." Yumi made it clear that she objected to the Royal Family's drain on the public purse strings, but this opinion may have been flavoured particularly with her frustration over the funding cuts to education that had made it difficult for her to find employment more suited to her recent MA. This broadly socialist perspective could be seen to be in contrast with her commitment to Britain as her chosen place of residence but not, as it would transpire, with her interest in the more "indie"¹ or alternative pop culture lifestyle that first attracted her to the UK in the first place.

After the general niceties had been exchanged and the Royal Wedding discussed, Yumi asked me a question that was clearly important to her: "Do you know Chika? Is she one of your research participants in London? I've known her since 1989..." In fact Chika (one of my London interlocutors) had mentioned this friendship to me previously; however, she was no longer in continuous contact with Yumi since moving up to London from the Manchester area 14 years ago. Chika had recently been in touch with a mutual friend from their time in Manchester (in fact Chika was only there for 18 months). This mutual friend had expressed some surprise over how 'normal', or unadventurous in appearance, Yumi had become, compared to the more alternative persona she had embodied when they were younger. This comment must be referenced in contrast to Chika's own sense of personal style, which can be described as an eclectic use of dresses and skirts that evoke a sense of the retro, as though the clothes themselves originated in the 1960s but have been reimagined for use in the twenty-first century. Yumi, on the other hand, is more conservatively dressed, today in jeans, trainers, and a peach coloured summer blouse. As a married and working mother of one, she does not give any indication that her fashion sense was ever anything less than inconspicuous, however it would appear that her politics have remained definitely left-of-centre.

¹ The term "indie" generally denotes a genre of rock music that is produced and distributed through smaller independent labels as opposed to an affiliation with a major music corporation. It is also associated with a particular ethos of do-it-yourself and a rebuff of a more mainstream lifestyle.

Yumi began to outline her friendships from her early days in Manchester, while she was living in Hulme. This is an inner city area of Manchester with a distinctive counter-culture ethos. During the 1970s and until the early 1990s, the high density housing became a significant social problem for the city and the distinctive crescent-shaped buildings were eventually torn down and replaced by new low-rise developments.² This conversation started when I asked her if she had lived in Hulme, as I knew that Chika had lived in that particular area of Manchester.³ Yumi replied “Oh Hulme! Yes I lived there. Charles Berry Crescent, that’s where I stayed! Strange place.” It transpired that Yumi had shared a flat there with Chika while attending a one-year education course in Lancaster as part of her Bachelor’s teaching degree in Japan. The significance of this particular urban space among the networks of friendships established by both Chika and Yumi must be noted here.

The Crescents in Manchester were a significant focal point for the students, musicians and artists during the eighties and early nineties and with the approval of Manchester Council many of these flats were ‘squatted’ as a means of insuring some degree of habitation. Chika and Yumi and a number of transient student friends occupied one such squat, and Yumi gave an enthusiastic account of the network of friendships and contacts that she found herself moving in at the time:

First of all I was friends with Miyuki, and that’s how I met Chika, through her. Chika was at Liverpool and she was doing a foundation art degree but she was living in Hulme. This would have been in 1989. I was doing this English course. It’s kind of funny because I got into trouble when I finally got back to Japan. I was supposed to go back as soon as I finished the course but I didn’t and my dad had to pay my airfare back to the government! So that summer...oh let me think. How the hell did I meet these people? Ok so I was at Charles Berry Crescent and I met this Japanese woman who had picked up this Japanese boy who had spent all of his money in the first month of being here (in the UK). She asked if he could stay at Chika’s flat, and she let him

² From <http://www.exhulme.co.uk> Accessed 02/02/13

³ I must comment here on the serendipitous nature of fieldwork and the social fields that this experience engenders. My husband had also been a resident of The Crescents in Manchester in the mid-1980’s while attending Manchester University as a post-graduate student, and this conversation had begun quite spontaneously between him and Chika some months previous to this interview.

stay. And through him, I met other friends...He is a music producer in Japan now. After he left, I met another friend, Yuko. We met at an Ocean Colour Scene concert and we started going to concerts together. She's now married to the guitarist of the other guy's (the music producer) band, so now I go to see them every time I go back to Japan.

Apart from their use as a residential area, the local residents at The Crescents would organise specific music nights such as reggae or post-punk in the pubs attached to The Crescents. Chika recalled one particular DJ who had "...these big crazy dreads. He looked kinda scary but he was a really nice guy." The bohemian character was essential to these women as this would have provided a good fit with their imagined perception of alternative Manchester. I would also argue that the prospect of living in the social housing blocks in Hulme fulfilled their desire for British life as they imagined it at that time, that is, as a bleak, urban landscape at the end of the Thatcher government, a perspective that would have been fuelled by their choice of music and the "scene" associated with it at that time. However the real focus point for the whirl of social activity that Yumi outlines here is not so much the clubs and streets of Manchester but the home, the flat she shared with Chika at the time and the various comings and goings of that particular tribe at that particular point in time. What emerges more explicitly in Yumi's account is the network of relationships and affiliations that she established, and the anecdotes that have imprinted themselves onto her narrative as a result of the ties that she developed in Manchester, so much so that she now calls it home. Ultimately, it was not just Yumi's enjoyment of the music scene that kept her returning to Manchester. Because of her movements in and around this lively subculture and the city, and because of her involvement with other residents both transient and permanent, a part of Yumi also became a part of Manchester.

Another aspect of living in this part of England was the tangible sense of potential physical danger that came from living in one of the more decrepit (at the time) areas of town. Although neither Chika nor Yumi were victim to any street violence it was acknowledged that daily life in Hulme came with a tangible sense of potential physical danger and this in turn gave the area a real frisson of gritty British realism. To live successfully and meaningfully within the confines of an urban setting such as

Hulme requires cooperation and interaction with other residents who share the same environment and the individuals whom one encounters during everyday activities (de Certeau 1984, Hannerz 1996). Even if the interactions with others remain non-verbal there is a whole range of etiquette regarding one's physical positioning within the shared space of, say, public transport or the pavement that requires a specific form of acceptable behaviours in order to successfully negotiate daily life. These particular forms of coded and embodied city life can only be deployed successfully if the correct context is understood by all. Chika and Yumi would have had to learn not just how to master the nuances of language within their new environment but also how to use their physical presence in new ways within new spaces in order to gain the cultural and personal fulfilment they were seeking when they made the move to Britain.

This particular transition suggests that both women were able to embody the social expectations and complexities of a new urban landscape with relative ease and enjoyment. The key element of this urban negotiation was found in the community of like-minded young people living in Hulme at the time. The discursive boundaries of *uchi* and *soto* (as discussed in Chapter Two) are renegotiated in order to accommodate new housemates, a new 'us', when necessary. These new faces were not all Japanese. For example, there was another flatmate of Chika's who was a German art student named Florian, and one of Yumi's first friendships in the area was with a German woman that she bonded with due to their mutual admiration of *Morrissey* (the former lead singer/songwriter of the Manchester band *The Smiths*). The flourishing music sub-culture of the time was the element that brought these young people to Manchester in order to participate in something that they felt was significant to them. The fulfilment of Yumi's *ikigai* was of such great importance at this time during her immersion in Manchester's post-punk music scene that she was willing to flout the expectations of those in charge of her year abroad. As she mentioned in the excerpt above, Yumi was expected to return to Japan immediately after finishing her year abroad, however she chose to remain for several months after this. Her father was held liable for this transgression, especially as he was an employee of the Tokyo Education Board – the same board that had authorised Yumi's year abroad in the first place. And while other Japanese acquaintances have returned home in the ensuing years (as did Yumi in order to finish her degree) she still maintains ties with Miyuki, an ardent Liverpool fan who often stops by when she travels to Liverpool from

London in order to watch matches. And of course she keeps ties with Chika in London by following her on Facebook.

5.3 The Importance of *The Smiths*

During our introductory interview in July 2010, Yumi had casually included the following comment, “I think I always wanted to come to England because I always liked the music, all the British bands, so I always wanted to go to Manchester and now that I am here I don’t travel so much.” One year later at our interview in July 2011, I asked Yumi what it was that brought her to Manchester in the first place and she gave me a quick and unequivocal answer.

It was *The Smiths*.⁴ I loved their music and them so much that I just had to come. I tried looking for an education institute in Manchester to do this [English] course but I couldn’t find one at the time so I went to Lancaster, which was the closest I could find to Manchester. Ok the first time I came to Manchester was in ’87, we stayed in this B&B and they told us where *The Hacienda* was, so we went to check it out. This was when I was still doing my undergraduate (teaching) degree. After I finished my degree in Japan I went to work at a Japanese boarding school in Bremen (in Germany) for two years teaching language for two years and every holiday, I came every summer, or every Easter, I can’t remember... I came to Manchester, just to spend time in Manchester.

Yumi clarified that her decision to move to Bremen was solely based on the city’s geographic proximity to Manchester. It was significant that Germany was in Europe and only a short flight away. Her desire to experience the Manchester of her imagination was clearly the driving factor in her decision to embody this particular cultural phenomenon as she states. But this was only made possible through the cultural and social capital that she was born into; the milieu that essentially structured Yumi’s social practices which worked to shape her perception of what constituted a desirable and attainable lifestyle (Bourdieu 1984). By immersing herself into the

⁴ The Smiths were one of the most iconic British bands of the late 1980s. The collaborative efforts of the song-writing team of Johnny Marr and Steven Morrissey produced a distinctive “indie” guitar sound topped with Oscar Wilde-esque lyrics grounded in a “forlorn, romantic poetry.” From <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/the-smiths-mn0000899530> Accessed 02/20/13.

indie music scene in Britain in the mid to late 1980s and declaring her attachment to the lifestyle represented by alternative bands such as *The Smiths*, Yumi distilled her reasons for being in Britain into the purchase of a very specific item:

...but I do remember buying a cassette, my first cassette, of Morrissey's (solo) album when it came out⁵. I was in Edinburgh at the time...I can't remember why I was in Edinburgh that time..., but I had never bought a cassette before, I always bought vinyl so I remember walking out of that record shop with this cassette in my hand and I was so excited to have it. So I suppose that is the reason why I am in Britain.

This desire to establish herself in the UK expressed itself in the more pragmatic ambition of obtaining the all important resident's work visas. However, as Kelsky would argue, this particular tactic placed Yumi's long term strategy into the realm of the erotic (2001). She found herself in a position to pursue marriage with an Englishman: "Yup, yes and that's (The Hacienda) where I met my first husband...aaannnd then we split up." Yumi's first marriage had lasted a year. I asked her if she felt it was difficult to make the transition from Japanese national to British resident, "Yes...I suppose so...I don't know!" She says this slowly, as if perhaps this is the first time she has considered her particular transnational situation in this manner. She continues:

I didn't find it hard. It was more like...it was frustrating at first because I came into the country with the fiancée's visa and I couldn't get work. So I couldn't get any work until I got married which I found frustrating so I spent six months doing nothing which I found...not bad, but I was getting bored. But once I got married I managed to find a part time job and then it was ok.

I was curious as to why Yumi had not pursued a long term position in teaching Japanese language as a means of employing her teaching credential from her undergraduate course back in Japan, but her overall pragmatism and determination to

⁵ This cassette would have been *Viva Hate*, released in March 1988, soon after the demise of The Smiths.

base herself in Britain became more apparent and pronounced. Yumi is very upfront about her second marriage:

I was teaching Japanese in Liverpool, but I wasn't making enough money to support myself. I didn't think that I could teach anything other than Japanese in this country so... I guess I felt that it would help my situation if I got married. I met my first husband in Manchester, and my current one as well, in a nightclub, in fact it was run by some mutual friends of ours, it was run by the same people, different venues but same people (where she met her first husband). He [J, her current husband] says that he knew me from before! He says that we met much earlier than I remember, but I don't remember.

Yumi's description of her early life in Manchester links together the embodiment of her life project of language acquisition and specific popular culture consumption with her choice of place. As mentioned previously, Yumi's narrative indicates that what constitutes the quotidian practices and behaviours in one place must be relearned as part of being a citizen in a new city. Success requires a specific form of commitment to the process of settlement whereby new additions, changes and refinements are made to one's existing cultural capital in such a way that these new habits of living become internalised to the point of habitual behaviours. From Yumi's experience, it can be argued that this is also the case for popular culture. In order to embrace an entertainment form and to commit one's limited income in the expenditure of these items requires a level of commitment to a fan ideal but also a commitment to a very specific ethic that relies on time, energy and money to accomplish the goal.

This process is indicative of how these technologies become internalised and repurposed to suit the personal ethics of the user, how they become technologies *for* the construction of self. In the Japanese context, Yumi was fulfilling her *ikigai*, that which gives her life purpose and sense. How is this different from work? Undeniably there is a lifestyle and lived practice dividend in this kind of personal investment into one's cultural capital in that what results is a final product of successful integration or assimilation into the host society. All of the activities outlined by Yumi require a personal investment of time and capital, resources which must be rationed and

parcelled out in order to completely incorporate and embody these consuming practices to a particular and self determined conclusion.

5.4 Yumi, Her Son and Language

Yumi's parenting approach also provides an example of the formative influence of popular culture, but in this instance it is possible to trace the long term resonance of her experience of these daily practices in the language training she currently imparts to her young son T. Yumi had started learning English after returning to Japan from a family holiday in Australia at the age of ten. As outlined in Chapter Two, she instigated this particular action after witnessing her mother's irritation on that holiday – her mother would be left alone and frustrated, unable to communicate, as her father wandered off for hours on end taking photographs. Yumi got involved with extra curricular English learning that included theatrical-based activities such as “doing plays, acting things, singing when I was ten.” As a participant in such English-speaking activities when a child, Yumi was more easily able to engage with cultural forms and texts as an emerging English speaker than other Japanese young women who lacked such cultural capital (ibid). This fluency enabled her to become an active member of the Kajagoogoo⁶ fan club in Tokyo which in turn led to more significant paid employment as she got older:

I just saw an advert in a magazine they (the Kajagoogoo Fan Club office in Tokyo) were looking for someone with a bit of English ability to work for free, just putting letters into envelopes and putting stamps on them, in the middle of Tokyo. I was only 16. I got free things when I started working for a music magazine in Japan doing translation work when I was a student, translating interviews and journalists.

Yumi's emerging interest in British music later culminated in her decision to visit Manchester as often as she possibly could before her degree course in Tokyo allowed her to take a year abroad. Her continuing investment in British popular culture was in part inspired by her lack of television at home. Again the power strategies within the

⁶ A British synthesizer-based pop band from the early 1980s, known for their photogenic lead singer and particularly successful hit single “Too Shy”, released internationally in 1983. www.kajagoogoo.com Retrieved 02/02/13.

Japanese home regarding media access can be seen to be linked to the life outcomes realised by Yumi as she cultivated the English language as a “little tactic of the habitat”. Yumi’s mother was adamant that television was a negative influence in the development of children, and although there was a small black and white television in the home, Yumi can only recall limited interaction with the device as a child, as well as feeling embarrassed by her family’s lack of colour television. With the support of her parents, becoming proficient in English gave Yumi a recognisable tool for developing her own personal “procedures of consumption” (de Certeau 1984:32). Yumi chose to incorporate less popular or seemingly more cutting edge popular culture texts into her persona until she was able to realise her desire to visit Manchester.

Yumi’s own personal attitudes towards television are now similar to those of her mother’s. T’s viewing is limited to only a few hours at the weekend and Yumi prefers that she is his main source of interaction when they are at home. During an interview at her home in November 2010 Yumi outlined her reasons for communicating exclusively in Japanese with T, who was aged six at the time, “I want him to be able to speak with my parents, my family, and just, you know, to know about his Japanese side.” It was clearly very important to Yumi that T know his Japanese side and her emphasis on Japanese language learning was the most organised of any of the other informants who had children. This approach can be compared with other Japanese mothers (such as Yumiko and Mariko), who often used English at home as a means of improving their own skills. To this end, Yumi’s strategy involved taking T to the Saturday Japanese School (kindergarten, or pre-school level) at Lymm every Saturday (a car journey of 45 minutes to an hour), but also included the purchase of a specific home learning correspondence course from Japan. The *Benesse* programme is a correspondence education company and one of the learning programmes they offer is a series of CDs that are intended for pre-school non-native Japanese speakers.⁷ By the time of my final interview with Yumi in July 2011, she updated me with T’s ongoing Japanese tuition, “We stopped the *Benesse* programme, because once you start primary school the cost doubles, plus he has started the Saturday school (primary level) at Lymm and that is much more intense, he has lots and lots of homework so

⁷ From <http://www.benesse-hd.co.jp/en/index.html> Retrieved 16/01/13.

we can't really justify the cost of doing the *Benesse* anymore." Yumi's use of a home learning programme designed for children was compatible with her own second language learning in that the CDs consisted of fun interactive learning activities with a goal-oriented sense of achievement at the completion of each programme. Yumi was able to participate in songs and plays as her language skills in English became increasingly accomplished.

Cox makes the distinction between the differences of the Western and Japanese concepts of play and leisure (2002). He suggests that recreation in Japan is based on the lack of distinction between creativity and order and offers this in comparison to the Western sense of play that stresses spontaneity and unconstructed behaviour. Leisure, then, is regarded as a structured activity for adults as well as children. In this way Cox suggests that to identify a Japanese way of leisure is to address "the creative experience of the participants and also of the structured logic of some activities" (ibid:182), to which I would suggest that language learning through cultural texts may be one such application. Cox also refers to the development in the Genroku era (1688-1704) of the rise of "popular performing arts" and the growth of cultural communities (*bunka shakai*), associations that served to support and promote the activities of the participants, much like the popular fan club organisations that seem to be self-forming around popular teen acts such as Kajagoogoo in the 1980s (ibid). This participation in the fan clubs that appear around the emergence of pretty-boy bands such as Kajagoogoo must also be linked to the expectations of a normative heterosexuality within gender performativity (Butler 1990, 1993).

5.5 On The Radio

Asan's narrative offers another opportunity to examine the relationship between the use and differentiation of spaces by social subjects as a historico-political issue (Foucault 1980:149). I am framing the time spent on the deliberate selection of particular texts and forms of popular culture by my informants as tactical in nature, however, it is at the point of utilisation that these two practices become significantly interdependent. Like all of the best tactics, the opportunities for indulging Yumi and Asan's individual propensity and taste for particular forms of leisure had to be weighed against the time and resources available to them at any given time. Thus a

straightforward example of listening to FEN⁸ radio in her room as a teen can be viewed as an approach employed by Asan to keep up with the latest American pop hits. But FEN radio is a remnant of the American Occupation of Japan at the end of the Second World War and is therefore imbued with an American imperialist ideology. It may have been a simple process of listening to the radio to Asan, but the source was entrenched within a framework of American ideology.

Nonetheless, this simple and straightforward statement of tactic must be situated within the wide range of actions that were available to her fifteen year old self. Asan internalised and incorporated not just the tunes and melodies, she was also sufficiently aware and in control of her own tastes and inclinations to incrementally add the whole process of listening to the radio into her repertory of being, a repertory that she utilised to fulfil her ambition of becoming an artist. As she explained to me:

My career started, basically when I was fifteen, since that time I hardly watched any television. I listened to the radio, a lot. It was good that I had a radio in my room. And I was playing FEN – the foreign network, and they were playing top forty all the time, sometimes news, but mostly music. And I loved the music! There was Japanese pop music on the other stations but I loved FEN. And also, I used to go to (Christian) Sunday school and there I had to sing gospel songs, children's gospel songs. It was in Japanese, but the melody wasn't. I actually discovered later that some of these songs were written by Japanese but with western (musical) clauses. I found it absolutely beautiful and amazing at the time, and that is one of the biggest musical influences I have, the church music, the Christian church music. And then I discovered The Carpenters. I think it was about the time they released the album of *Now and Then*, which was the biggest album for them. It had all the hits on it. And FEN was playing The Carpenters every day, along with others like Elvis and the Bee Gees. And then...I discovered that my voice was similar to Karen Carpenter's. And I began to sing with my friends. Actually I

⁸ This was the "Far East Network" which was a series of radio stations originally intended to serve American forces serving overseas but soon became popular with Japanese teens for its access to Western culture. It is now known as the "American Forces Network" (AFN) From <http://www.jg3.com/fen/fenhist.shtml> Accessed 05/02/13

was in the girls-only school, but they had electric guitars, and bass guitars. And at the age of 15, I was listening to one of those midnight radio things, American Top 40 type of thing, then I discovered the song called “Midnight Train to Georgia” by Gladys Knight and The Pips. I was so moved by her singing. And I started crying! I was crying and I thought, I want to do it. And at that moment, I decided I want to do it, I want to have a career in music. Ever since, I was determined until I actually made it.

In a previous interview session, Asan had explained why she wasn’t watching much television at the time: “By the time I was about fourteen or fifteen, the Japanese bubble had burst and my dad was getting older so he didn’t have to spend so much time at work. He was home a lot more and watching his own programmes on television.” Asan’s tactic of retreating to her bedroom allowed her to circumvent the expressions of power and male dominance taking place in the shared domestic space in order to address her studies and listen to FEN on the radio, which she acknowledged as helping to improve her competence in English. Here is a tactic that articulates the strategy of improving language skills, an articulation that at the time held no foreseeable long-term resonance for Asan. Ultimately, however, her English language knowledge came to represent the strategy that enabled her to embody a sense of self that was ultimately constituted from the tactics and strategies of the *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984). It is inherently clear from Asan’s example that the link between strategy and tactic is so tightly interconnected that it is difficult to discern where one action ends and the other begins. Consuming FEN American Top Forty radio became a regular practice that worked to overcome the unwelcome dominance of her father in the living space and also enhanced her own long-term strategy of second language proficiency.

Asan’s narrative gives a glimpse into how very particular geo-political conditions from a particular era or age go some way into shaping the self as an object in the world. It also problematises the question of what actually constitutes the “great strategies of geo-politics” (1980:149). Presumably Foucault was intending to mean something far grander than the differentiation and personal uses of rooms and technologies in the home. Asan’s example provides a representation of both scenarios, as she escapes to her room for her own interests yet indulges in a form of

imperialist broadcast. These micro-processes are an example of how media practice becomes part of the practices of self-constitution. The transnational ultimately becomes rooted in Britain by reflexively utilising the material and conceptual tools that stem from popular culture. Asan describes how she manoeuvres her musical inclinations and particular musical taste into a substantial career in music. In her narrative Asan describes attending Christian Sunday school, indicating how the subversion of long-established spiritual beliefs that belong to a traditional Japan are transformed into an invigorating source of artistic influence to a young child. Asan takes her own power of agency from a dominating Western ideology and thus makes it a part of her self-realisation as a person in the world. This is accomplished by negotiating the boundaries of inside and outside, which serve to define the networks of the social self.

5.6 The Artist on the Move

I first encountered Asan at an Earth quake charity event at Charlton House in Southeast London, where she was dressed in a black polo-neck jumper and neat and tidy jeans. She and her husband were wrestling with a tripod for a video camera and it later transpired that they were collecting footage for a self-released earthquake charity download she was preparing. I knew her husband from the Japanese language course (with Chika) that I was doing at the time. I met Asan in the basement of the Waterstone's book shop on Piccadilly, in the Grade One listed modern classic building that once housed the menswear and tailoring company Simpson's of Piccadilly, not far from the Japan Centre. She had suggested this location for our interviews as it is quiet and there is no mobile phone reception there to interrupt our conversations. The cool marble room also offered a soothing respite to the humidity of the approaching London summer. Asan arrived, dressed tastefully and youthfully; for this meeting she was dressed in jeans that looked freshly ironed and a white shirt with a light cardigan and during the course of our meetings she regularly remarked that it was so hard to know what to wear during the start of the London summer as the days can instantly turn to cooler temperatures and rain. Asan is petite and always wears heels. She was always in full make up, but it served to make her skin look translucent and dewy rather than overly made-up. When I first saw her approach the table I was sitting at I was surprised by how young she looked. Asan kept her hair dyed to a dark auburn shade. Her jewellery was gold yet understated in that she

would wear several thin gold chains in a layered look rather than anything ostentatious. Another reason for this location is that her accountant husband's place of work is just around the corner so she was able to meet him for a joint ride home on public transport after our interview. There is nothing in her demeanour or style of dress that overtly indicates her long association with the entertainment industry.

Asan's personal investment in popular culture has taken on another form of expression in her life in that she has been able to secure a livelihood for herself in the entertainment industry, in part due to her natural abilities as a singer. She has, most of working life, been a part of the entertainment industry. She arrived in the UK in 1990 knowing only a few people, one of whom was hired by her management in Japan and this person looked after her, the idea being at the time that she was coming to Britain to make contacts with people in the music industry here. "She was a sort of coordinator and she introduced me to some people in the industry, so it was a business-like relationship rather than her looking after me like a mum." Asan outlined her career progression and incorporated the very components of identity, that of age, gender and class, as she outlined her career progression although she was unaware of this.

She recounted her story to me in such a natural and linear manner that I feel that I would be doing Asan a grave injustice if I were not to include it in its entirety:

Actually it was a real struggle. I shouldn't say struggle, because struggle is not what I went through. I was living at home, my parents paid for my school. I was given a fantastic education and opportunities by my parents. But my mind was set that I wanted to be professional, and in that respect it wasn't working. I tried all kinds of things, like playing for the competitions and [I] contacted record companies, but none of these worked out, until the age of 26. I don't know how many record companies I contacted, and also the amount of people I met. So I, I almost gave up! There was a pressure for Japanese women that after you finish university you get the job or you get married. Or even if you get the job, you get married. But then, because I was determined to do something in music, I decided to take a part time job, instead of the full time job. So I started working for my uncle, who was a professor of the

Tokyo University, in his laboratory, just looking after a few things for half the week, and my parents weren't impressed so they pressurised me to get a proper job, or give up, or get married. And I said, never, and carried on. And eventually, I got, I sort of decided I don't think I can make it, because I was getting too old, I was 25 or 26 so I gave up singing, because I realised that the people I met (in the industry), I don't think I can get along with them either. Because you know what it is like, they always talk about body figure, what you look like, and sex, you know, that's what they're interested in. So I thought, I don't think I can do it, but then, I don't want to give up. So I decided on just (song) writing, more concentrated on writing, then eventually I met someone through my friend, went out to have a drink with her, and it turned out she was running the management company for the composers. So I sort of gave her my demo tape, and the next day she rang me and said "I think your material is pretty interesting, so would you like to meet up?" So we met and discussed what we could do. And we decided to give it a go! But that was when I was 26. After university, the band (I had been working with) went on to do other things."

Asan did eventually work with Richard Carpenter, an achievement that I linked to the fulfilment of a personal ambition, but Asan put me right on that somewhat misdirected assumption. She was on the move with her career at the time, and after a brief stint in Los Angeles – she finally arrived in London. But this was not her objective at the outset:

I came (to Britain) like (aged) 30 or 31, five years later. I came to expand my career. Because I used to love 80s Prog Rock⁹, although the music I was writing was nothing like that, I had that type of music in my head. Always I wanted to get closer to the source of the music. So I thought about going to LA first but I felt that LA was not the place for me. I just thought I couldn't blend in. It was Beverly Hills, so it was kind of shallow, haha! So I am glad that I ended up in London. I was in Hong Kong, Hong Kong EMI was looking

⁹Progressive rock (often shortened to prog or prog rock) is a form of rock music that evolved in the late 1960s and early 1970s as part of a mostly British attempt to elevate rock music to new levels of artistic credibility. <http://www.progarchives.com/Progressive-rock.asp#definition> Retrieved 11/02/13.

after us, and the MD (Managing Director) said, your voice is so like Karen Carpenter, and so why don't you talk to Richard Carpenter and work together. So I wrote a letter to Richard and through the record company it went to him and I asked him why don't you produce my album and he said yes, but I tell you, it was all about money, we (the record company) had to pay him a lot of money. He wouldn't have worked with us without paying.

Frith notes that “popular music places us in the social world in a particular way” and this property is a part of how music creates experiences for the self (1996:121). The experience of pop music is an experience of identity by creating affiliations and alliances with both performers and other fans. Asan was motivated by her *ikigai*, what she felt to be her purpose in life, to pursue her career in music whatever the means. In her case, this meant subverting the expected norms of behaviour expressed by her parents. She has rooted herself in London, and although she admits that her career “is quieter because I'm not that committed”, she still enjoys “doing small shows in Tokyo”, and she travels to Japan several times a year. This travel is not only for career purposes, but also serves to maintain family ties with her brothers and her extended family. As we came to the close of our conversation, she added that at that point (when she was working with EMI and had just arrived in London), “it looked like anything was possible at that time in my life. It felt that I could do anything. I think we all have times in our lives when we feel that way. And that was my time.”

5.7 Similarities and Differences

There is an opportunity here to consider another way in which the “great strategies of geo-politics” inform and define the shape that the “little tactics of the habitat” are taken by individuals within the domain of the home with the aim of acting upon, and subsequently determining, one's *ikigai*. As told to me by Yumi and Asan, the narratives of their early use of popular culture texts and how these in turn shaped their decisions to live in the UK are indicative of minor yet significant friction between the social actors within the home. For Yumi, her mother's ambivalence towards television viewing and the perceived negative qualities that this action embodied, was but one element that opened the possibility of new and varied experiences with language, pop music and the practices associated with this industry. These narratives represent the personal daily interactions that take place in any family home that

consist of parents and teens as the once pliable children grow into individuals who are finding their place in the world. But these micro-processes are themselves grounded in the understanding of how family life is constituted in Japan. And in an increasingly wider lens this understanding of the family is in turn informed by how Japanese-ness was constructed at the time of my interlocutors' upbringing. While it would be impossible, and indeed undesirable, to try to isolate any particular social positioning as the key element in defining how Yumi and Asan became the women they are today, their narratives provide insight into how every day domestic practices work to shape the individual.

These two women provided narratives of their experiences with media that clearly underscore the role of text and practice as integral to the embodiment of a transnational imagination. The desire for physical relocation is based on an imaginary conception of a city and the options that a life somewhere else might offer in terms of self-fulfilment. De Certeau considers these movements to be a part of the urban text, in such a way that a migrational or metaphorical city slips into the clear text of the planned and readable city (1984:93). Movement or migration to the city of the imagination can only occur where sufficient investment in developing the appropriate cultural capital relative to the imagined place has taken place.

In addition, there is a further correlation between Asan and Yumi, who have found themselves in the UK as a result of a personal and intense engagement with specific forms of popular music. Their opportunity to pursue and engage with their chosen media texts was enabled through a local commodification specific to the popular art form that each of these women pursued. Although Asan was determined to work in the sector that most suited her natural vocal abilities, Yumi was able to utilize her more academic inclinations in order to get herself a place in an English language course in Lancaster. Although Yumi made no reference to any parental privilege, I am in no doubt that her father's position with the Board of Education in Tokyo worked to her advantage in securing her year abroad. Both Asan and Yumi have worked the socio-economic advantage they were born into to achieve the specific ambition of relocating to another country, combined with the utilisation of the cultural capital that they invested so much of their personal time and effort as younger people to achieve. By referencing Clammer (1995), I would like to argue that the transnational

movements of these women represent an embodiment of how class, gender and life skills serve to motivate the individual to pursue a personal fulfilment that has been earned through their own effort and sheer will.

Underlying the realisation of these life choices is a particular gendered performance of class status. Both Yumi and Asan assured me that they were both from middle-class families but there was certainly a difference of degrees in the forms of middle class embodied by their families. Asan was somewhat cagey about giving away too many details about her family, for example she was very clear that she did not want her name used in my research as her father had always cautioned her to not use her real name for fear of giving away too much information about one's self, one's identity. Her father had been a highly placed executive at Toshiba and Asan enjoyed a very comfortable and more elite upbringing as mentioned in Chapter One. She was privately educated, an education which culminated with a degree from Gakushuin University, which is renowned as the university attended by the Japanese Royal Family. As Kondo points out, cosmopolitanism and familiarity with components of Western culture serve as markers of difference or differences in status between the layers of middle class-ness in Japanese society (1990).

5.8 An Evaluation

Clearly it is essential to consider and address the polemics of power that have shaped, and continue to shape the social worlds of my informants. These women have managed to circumvent the traditional expectations of Japanese womanhood in order to fulfil personal aspirations. They are performing what has been identified as “a fiction of individualism” (White 1995:2007) but where is the line between fiction and reality? Have these women circumvented a less desirable and more traditional life outcome for themselves by physically moving themselves to Britain?

Neither Asan nor Yumi gave any impression that they were running away from a life in Japan nor did they seem to be evading a particular lifestyle. In fact they both return to Japan as often as time and money will allow. They were looking to live a life that best suited their dreams and ambitions, albeit from specific privileged positions that encompass class, gender and ethnicity. Millie Creighton notes that in Japan, consumerism is less a way of finding oneself and more a way of linking selves to

others (1994). The others that Yumi and Asan linked with prior to their arrival to Britain are a cohort of similarly engaged artists and young people who exist outside of their zone of social familiarity. These women have bucked the trends in terms of life-stage predictability as outlined by White: “Japanese at nineteen tend to be in the work force, at 27 married, at 30 in mid-career and mid-parenting roles, at 55 retired and in a second job, and nearly finished with most parenting activities” (ibid:260).

I am proposing that the trajectories of these women’s lives have been constituted in part by practices in the form of a tactical pursuit of leisure, that is, leisure as category of personal social action and practice that has been specifically employed by these women in the form of “interests and desires that are neither determined or captured by the systems in which they develop” (Certeau 1984:36). By investing leisure time and focussing a good deal of personal energy on pursuing the pop culture forms they selected for themselves, these women enhanced their second language skills whilst still in Japan so that they could, with some degree of assurance, use English in the correct form and context. Armed with a measure of confidence in their language skills and in themselves, they set out to explore new potentialities and new futures. I am also suggesting that the process of learning a second language can be regarded as a long-term tactical engagement that has produced unpredictable potentialities which only become viable as the young English learner becomes a self-aware and self-determining woman who is able to realise specific life outcomes. The particular strategy of second language learning that I identify here is further bound together within the child’s Japanese domestic sphere as these measures could not have taken place without the collusion and support of the young adolescent’s parents. The embodiment of such a practice is imbricated and inseparable from parental expectations for their child, however, the long-term results of international relocation may not necessarily represent the parent’s desired outcome for their adult child.

In this chapter I have focussed on the case studies of Yumi and Asan as they seem to represent two different approaches to what can be arguably considered as a similar outcome – the transition from Japanese to British resident. By taking the consumption of specific texts as a leisure activity, it is possible to link other aspects of the social and the cultural and acknowledge that these sites of consumption also visibly and forcefully become sites for the production of self and localities. This

approach further enhances these practices as expressions of the broader economic and political boundaries that both Yumi and Asan grew up in. Here we must also take into account how the adolescent's concept of leisure was constituted – Asan enjoyed listening to the radio as a form of relaxation and was only able to confirm with hindsight that the countless hours spent listening to American top forty format radio was crucial to her progress in English. Yumi also insisted on improving her English skills as a result of witnessing her mum's difficulties with language whilst on family holidays in America (see chapter 1) and she went on to join an English language children's theatre group. Her improved linguistic abilities allowed her to join the Kajagoogoo fan club organisation, an association which inevitably caused her to roll her eyes in embarrassment whenever I brought it up. However, this in turn led to paid work translating British music magazines and access to these English language texts were pivotal in enhancing her awareness of the burgeoning music scene in Manchester. Even now, as adult women in their middle stages of life, both Asan and Yumi remain interested, if not completely committed, to following bands and trends such as those that inspired them as young women. This, in addition to their continuing residence in Britain, remains a lasting legacy to the influences that they chose to incorporate, and continue to incorporate, into the ongoing project of self and identity.

5.9 Conclusion

Contemporary popular culture is part of a highly mobile and transformative process that spreads beyond the borders of any single nation. The overall theoretical perspective of popular culture used to be that it is the culture of the masses, generally produced with an eye towards profit and quick consumption, unhampered by art or intellect, a position that was iterated in 1944 by Horkheimer and Adorno of the Frankfurt School and one that continues to be perpetuated by assumptions of class hierarchy (Gans 1999). But popular culture is culture utilised in various ways by different people and the movement of the Japanese diaspora and other Asian immigrant groups to the West has resulted in an increased flow of cultural products that has been facilitated through the use of transnational media, and have contributed to shaping the flow and access of these products online (Park 2004). Even the terminology that is most often used, that of 'consumption', implies that the content is absorbed internally and that relevant ingredients are kept for their usefulness whilst

the rest is discarded. Depending on the complex networks of socio-economic location in relation to gendered, national and generational subjectivities, the decision to participate in or consume particular mediated texts can be analysed as a form of behaviour operating as a complex intervention in the ongoing social life of actual social subjects, Japanese women who perhaps see themselves first as wives and mothers.

The stories of both these women offer a contrasting illustration of practice and embodiment through their own personal commitment towards a restructuring of social, cultural, ethnic, national, and familial identities, roles and relations. Such changes would have taken place over the course of adolescence and young adulthood. At some point in their lives, both Yumi and Asan made the transition from middle class Japanese girlhood and young womanhood with an understanding of change and movement not just inspired by popular culture texts but underpinned by the basic language skills and an understanding of how to negotiate a non-native urban space.

What is demonstrated in this chapter are the culturally specific constructions of self and self representation. The Japanese selves that Mathews describes as having a myriad of choices from the cultural supermarket are also subject to the forces of modernity, changing 'scapes (Appadurai 1996) and globalisation. The Japanese women I interviewed are not constructed in a vacuum of Japanese origin but live, work and have grown up in a society where the embodied practices of multiple social fields have experienced influence and change from outside of Japan. Their mediated lives and experiences in the UK would be better served by emphasising how the individual works to constitute the self through a long-term investment into the pursuit of popular culture. These women came to Britain as a part of the ongoing project of constructing their selfhoods, a life project of personal agency that began with and was galvanized by an active pursuit of popular culture. By taking advantage of the prevailing shifts in Japan's socio-political development in the latter half of the twentieth century, my informants were socially and economically able to manipulate the cultural contexts of the forms of popular culture that were available to them into specific pathways that led towards a personal vision of self-fulfilment, pathways that ultimately led to Britain.

Chapter Six: The Internet and The Social Self

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will examine more closely the manifestations of self identity and social attachment that were initiated and experienced by my interlocutors through daily internet¹ activity. There was consistent online contact with both Japanese and English language sites by all of the women I interviewed. This chapter argues that the internet and the interactions which comprise its use represent a new format of sociability. This positioning is a result of how my interlocutors spoke of their internet experience, which can be summed up as expressions of an intimate Japanese self and personal choice rather than as being overtly identifiable as a statement of national identity. And what of practice? Under the umbrella of internet use, social and media practice become intertwined to create new forms of meaning and pleasure in addition to creating new parameters of sociability. As a technology for the self, the internet is used by the women as a particular site of social practice that allows them to negotiate and constitute a gendered social self that locates Japan as its point of origin.

The internet is a complex social domain which offers up an arena whereby interaction with the digital creates new collective practices that impart socially significant lived experiences (cf. Castells 2001, Hesmondhalgh 2002). Although these experiences may begin as specifically personal and individual encounters with electronic texts and data, what emerges are new parameters of a shared agency. The internet is designed to be a social place, and this inherent sociability indicates new and inventive ways to form and inform the self (cf. Miller and Slater 2000). The socially constructed and performed nature of identity markers such as ethnicity, class and gender become the nuanced elements of daily internet use and part of how my interlocutors make themselves at home both within the domestic space and cyberspace. It is the unequivocally social nature of the digital sphere that enables the women I interviewed to connect with families from afar, research user-generated information in the form of blogs and recipe sites, and post their own original content for a diversity of viewers

¹ I am siding with current convention that suggests that the term “internet”, rather than “Internet” has now entered into generic usage and no longer requires an upper case letter. See Schwartz, J. “Who Owns the Internet? You and i do”. <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/12/29/weekinreview/29SCHW.html> Retrieved 05.03.2014

both local and global. Once my interlocutors were in a position to access the internet from the home, there was a clear shift in television's position in the domestic sphere as the main source of personal mediated pleasure and meaning. At the time of the interviewing process all of the women had had online access in the home for several years. Without exception they used the internet daily with times ranging from one hour to several hours, especially as in Chika and Mariko's case, if they were self employed and working mostly from home. The narratives they provided regarding their internet use reflect how they and their families absorbed the changes in technology brought about by new hardware. But more importantly the specificity of how and why they chose to engage with particular sites indicates how they view themselves as transnational women empowered with a very modern digital agency. This chapter first considers my interlocutors' thoughts on life in Britain prior to the arrival of the internet, followed by discussions of how the internet changed communication and leisure practices, and how this is important in terms of work and keeping in touch with Japan.

6.2 Life BI – Before the Internet

Deuze suggests that as new and different media forms and technologies become pervasive and ubiquitous they become invisible to those who use them, so that we as participants and implementers become blind to that which shapes our lives the most (2011). This may explain why those women who were here in Britain before the advent of online communication found it difficult to remember or even contemplate a life lived offline. And how did these women manage before the internet had become an integral part of their daily lives? Out of the Edinburgh group, Kimiko, Kazuko and Wakako had been in the UK the longest and their recollections were especially meaningful. When asked if there might have been an internet shaped void in the lives of the women who arrived in the UK before its widespread use in the home, both Kimiko and Kazuko had to stop and reflect. According to Kimiko, who arrived in 1993, "I just got on with life." She continued: "I just thought that I am here and I had to get on with daily life here. I was married, I had a job. I didn't stop to think that maybe I was missing Japan, or hearing Japanese being spoken." Kazuko nodded in agreement and added that feeling nostalgic for Japan would have been a waste of time as there was nothing you could do about it.

During the course of this conversation Kazuko once again calmly and quietly commandeered the attention of the group. Everyone at the table seemed to realise that when she leant in to join in the conversation it was because she had something thoughtful and profound to add and this time it was no exception:

I didn't have an option to go back to Japan. This was my life and I had to make my life here. I became very melancholic. I missed Japan but now this is the internet world...so in my private time I am able to return to Japan on the internet.

The poignancy of Kazuko's observation of how she coped before the internet was supplemented by the others in various ways. Wakako agreed that she "wanted to establish a new life and settle down, so I focussed on that. But once I settled, I started to miss Japanese life." Wakako contributed a new facet of how she can now interact with Japan – "I can see what is happening in Japan on the internet. What we should be eating, how the seasons are changing." Kimiko made a cogent observation by noting that that this was because Wakako wanted to "have a connection with something", which I interpreted as meaning her Japanese self and the life she remembered. At any rate, the implication among these women is that they were so focussed on the long-term project of settling into their new lives in Britain that they had no time to consider what they might have been missing back in Japan. The transition to a life in a new country would have removed my interlocutors from "the world of audience" or *seken*, the invisible and ill-defined judgemental aggregate that sharpens a person's self-awareness (Lebra 1992:106).² Yet there was no sense from Kimiko, Kazuko or Wakako that they were in any way relieved to be away from the social pressure imposed by the native constituency back in Japan, although such sentiments may have faded over time. On the contrary, once they had internet access, they were pleased to be able to interact, albeit externally, with Japanese social life and language.

Kae, as the youngest member of the group, was quite adamant about the need for internet access in her life:

² This is addressed in further detail in section 6.4.

It's really quite shocking because I am very new here, only four years, this is my fourth year, and because I had my child in Japan before I came, so to me, having internet access is almost...[here she searches for the words] definite, necessary. If I didn't have internet access, I couldn't live here, so knowing that the people who live here for longer than me didn't have internet access almost at all, and couldn't get into any access to the Japanese culture, but still...I am surprised how they managed, how they had a life!

What is memorable in these casual exchanges between the Japanese women in Edinburgh is that the online presence of Japan serves as a continuing point of reference and information and as a location of reassurance for these women, most of whom have been in the UK for ten to fifteen years or more. The strength of attachment to the idea of Japan is clear as is their implementation of the internet as a significant point of contact. It is notable how they recall their longing for the experience of Japan as a kind of melancholia, as Kazuko phrased her feelings. Having access to the internet has allowed these women to feel at home within the home as a kind of meta-sociability. For the interviewees in Edinburgh, the internet has resolved the issue of living a life devoid of all sense of familiarity and reassurance especially with regard to the native language. Its presence gives the subject the opportunity to participate "in the rhetoric of those with whom they share a mutual understanding of life" and where such "interaction...can proceed on the taken-for-granted premises of a set of shared assumptions" (Morley 2000:48). But this principle of shared assumptions is not limited to Japan or Japanese as the sole location of cyber contact. The internet also provides space for the negotiation of the English language and the British other as will be noted in the following sections.

6.3 Sociability and Communication

As a product and producer of complex networks, the internet is both barrier and gateway in that it allows access to the Japan that the women want to see and know and acknowledge yet does so without the cloying cultural boundaries and limitations that perhaps in part motivated these women to leave in the first place. They have reconnected with a Japan that is imbued with nostalgia and memory from a distance, which in turn offers the opportunity to filter and specify what and how much they see of Japan, and this includes family members. Internet telephony that incorporates real

time face to face communication such as Skyping has the added benefit of maintaining visual familial ties whilst also emphasising the lifestyle changes that have introduced the need for this new kind of communication. My interlocutors pull up and access the friendships and relationships that they are interested in investing time in, and are able to overlook those relationships that are may be deemed no longer worth pursuing.

But this works both ways. Yumiko bemoaned the fact that she is unable to have any online contact with her sister due to her sister's busy timetable (despite living with her parents at the time of the interview) and is also unable to conduct any sort of online relationship with her brother due to a problematic relationship with her sister-in-law. Her parents in the Tohoku area do not have computer access on their own so she is not able to indulge in any other communication with them other than telephone, "It's sad because my parents can't see my daughters...but now my older daughter speaks a little bit (of Japanese) and she understands completely but my parents have quite a northern Japan accent, so it's quite sad really." Yumiko keenly felt the loss of opportunities for meaningful communication between her parents and her children. Yumiko added that because of their strong regional accent they might have a hard time understanding the girls anyway, but she hoped that as her daughters become older and hopefully more fluent in a standardised Japanese that they will be able to establish a relationship with her parents based more solidly on personal communication rather than via herself as translator.

Once again it was the Edinburgh women who were able to provide accounts detailing a wide range of internet practice. This group best personified the wide range of uses for the internet that they found most helpful. These discussions took place at the Ten Hill Place Hotel bar, a quiet setting near to several university buildings, in the centre of the city and therefore within easy reach of all the discussants. In the following transcript, Wakako was drinking a pint of Guinness and continued with red wine. Kimiko was also drinking red wine that evening. Kazuko kept to tea and both Eiko and Kae had large lattes which they enthusiastically followed with dessert. My opening question to them was deliberately open ended ("I would like to ask about your internet use today") and they did not need any further encouragement from me to engage with each other regarding their usage. Wakako was first to speak and replied:

Today I used it for two hours but everyday I use the internet. My life could not exist without [the] internet. I use it for communicating with people and friends, but today I was researching a special opera that is coming to Edinburgh in two weeks time.³

However, Wakako stressed that she doesn't "use the internet to communicate with Japanese people. I like to use my voice. I even like to write postcards!" For Wakako, the internet seemed to present a barrier for what she felt was genuine communication. This was fine, as long as this communication consisted of personal research or interactions via email with English speakers. However, this kind of interaction was unsatisfactory when communicating with friends and family in Japan.

Eiko seemed mystified that someone would not use the internet for communication and immediately countered Wakako's internet use with her opinion that:

On the contrary I use the internet for communication. I don't use Facebook that much. You can't expect quite intimate communication...but I still find it useful to stay in touch with people. Like *mixi*, even though I don't use it that much, people started to get in touch with me, girlfriends, to find out how we are doing, we are starting to know each other again, it feels like we are telling each other 'oh yes let's get on with our life'.⁴ Although it doesn't give you real communication, like instant communication, so even though you can get in touch with people on a day-to-day basis I still find it quite good. I do have a *mixi* page, and I do Twitter quite a lot, and it's handy to...(she searched for the words here) you really have to summarise what you want to say, just to think about potential undercoated words.⁵

When asked to explain what she meant by 'real communication' Eiko was quite clear that to her, real communication consists of real time contact such as Skype or

³ Scottish Opera was bringing a piano-only version of *Carmen* to Musselburgh (a suburb outside of Edinburgh) the following month.

⁴ *mixi* is a Japanese social networking service. It requires a Japanese email address or mobile phone number (thus maintaining Japanese exclusivity) in order to sign up.

⁵ The inference here is that language can be quite slippery when trying to communicate concisely and at speed.

telephone use. Since *mixi* operates in a similar manner to Facebook in that users can post updates and news in a diary format, Eiko felt that this format was not real communication. One can only respond to a posted comment, rather than have a proper conversation.

Wakako responded to this: “I don’t need it, I don’t use it like that. I don’t use it like Eiko-san. I don’t use so much social networking I want to speak in Japanese directly to people so I use the telephone more for speaking to people.” However this is not to say that Wakako felt that social networking sites were entirely without use. A few minutes later she contributed that she gets information about class reunions from Facebook and *mixi* and they can be quite useful, but that she can’t use these sites comfortably as a means of two-way communication. It is important to bear in mind that there is a fifteen year age gap between Eiko and Wakako, and this may have contributed to their differing perspectives on the benefits and limitations of internet contact. The deterritorialising effect of internet communication was seen as a hinderance to Wakako, who could not accept the legitimacy of such interaction as constituting real interaction. On the other hand, Eiko felt that this very same quality was a boon to her ability to keep in touch with others. This is an indication how the internet has initiated changes in sociability and connectivity that have redefined the experience of place and belonging for the transnational. This perspective, with its emphasis on place, is in contrast to other attempts to represent the experience of the transnational as one of a de-territorialised flow (cf. Lash and Urry 1994).

Kae introduced another use for cyberspace in that she uses “the internet for communication with my parents. On Skype they can see my son. Because he doesn’t speak any words yet he can’t use the phone so we use the Skype camera. My parents only use the internet for Skype.” The only reason that Kae’s parents had for initiating internet use in their home back in Japan was to maintain family ties with Kae and her family. Eiko has the more unusual family unit in that “my in laws are German and they use Skype. My husband’s family has really good internet access. It really helps my kids to speak and understand German. My family doesn’t have internet and they are not interested in technology like my husband’s family.” It is worth noting here that Eiko’s mother not only lives on a farm in the rural Tohoku region, but that she has been widowed since Eiko was quite young. Kae says that it is very helpful to

communicate with both sets of parents. “I use Skype for both sides of the family. With distance it is helpful to have to have internet. My husband’s family is not as far away like Japan (they are in England) but it is useful to have Skype.”

The new forms of sociability introduced by the internet have clearly been a boon to the women of Edinburgh. The development of video telephone services have especially come to represent a new, efficient and, as Eiko noted, more natural form of communication. This reflection echoes the observation in Miller and Sinanan’s most recent paper, where they suggest that digital communication offers up a more organic and natural third space in which the two parties are no longer restricted or defined in terms of where they are geographically situated but are united in a new and distinct yet temporary space created through the connection of the devices themselves (2012). In Miller’s example “rather than [the] webcam being that which connects two places, we come out from those places to dwell in this new space which is webcam itself” (ibid). This is similar to Deuze’s proposition that we no longer live with media but rather *in* media which results in such a level of pervasiveness that its presence no longer registers as anything extraordinary. This is the point where life becomes media and practice becomes culture, where establishing and maintaining a social life is integral to our existence as social beings and the internet provides new pathways in the form of complex networks that are both human engineered and technologically determined. And yet these technologies that were once new and exclusive have now reached a level of maturity and embeddedness in all our everyday lives that it becomes unremarkable.

6.4 Expressions of Leisure

As part of the ongoing project of agency in which the women I interviewed creatively worked on and enacted their sense of identity, a specific concept of leisure was expressed through the allocation of personal time to online activities.⁶ It can be argued that using personal time in this manner reflects a creativity that offers these women a channel to contest the social and cultural constraints they may experience as transnational Japanese women (cf. Lebra 1984). Kimiko gave a vivid example of how she categorises her online time and space – that her choice is to spend several hours

⁶ A more specifically gendered take on this use of online time is explored further in Chapter Five.

catching up with online television programmes is a manifestation of how she views her leisure time.

As we sat in our usual wine bar in Edinburgh (chosen by Waki for its central location and subsidised bar prices) Kimiko, 47 at the time of our interview, sipped her glass of wine before replying:

This is really funny because if you were doing this research last year (referring to 2009) I would say only an hour? Or maybe that I don't go on the internet. Only just for work, but not really at home. But because I found this *Tudou*⁷... I have been living here (in Edinburgh) for 17 years but I didn't really...I was unable to connect with Japanese TV at all until this year. But then I found this website.....and Kazuko, she is quite into it as well.

Kimiko discovered *Tudou* through an online search for episodes of a particular English-language comedy drama programme that she had become fond of:

The funny thing is I was looking for *Ugly Betty*, the American programme and I wanted to watch the whole series so I went into a Google search but everywhere that came up you can only watch 15 minutes, you can't just watch the whole thing, you have to go back and start again, then *Tudou* came up, and then the names of Japanese programmes appeared just there and so I clicked it and that was my mistake! They went into Japanese ...And I noticed that they showed old films as well. I was able to make out the words even though they were in Chinese *kanji*, I could read enough of them to make out the Japanese names. I think that if they [the programme] had a DVD out, I would take the DVD, buy the DVD and just watch that way but you have to wait for the DVD to come out. And (on *Tudou*) you can watch quite updated films as well. With Chinese subtitles and sometimes Korean subtitles.

⁷ *Tudou* is a video sharing website based in China, founded by Gary Wang and Marc van der Chijs. which went live in April 2005. Source: <http://china-netinvestor.blogspot.co.uk/2007/10/meet-founders-of-tudou-com-chinas.html> Accessed 01.08.13

Kimiko took her declaration further, and admitted to once spending ten hours watching Japanese programmes online. “The longest I have spent watching is ten hours! But that is not average, that is just one day. I don’t stop! I can’t stop! I don’t know how I got hooked that much, it was not nice.” There was a collective gasp of surprise from other women at the table in response, which made Kimiko reiterate that that particular instance was a one off, but that she “can watch until the wee hours!” Kimiko clearly found her avid interest in watching Japanese television online somewhat problematic but this did not seem to curb her appetite for online programming. Despite the obvious personal pleasure she derived from time spent viewing, Kimiko somehow felt guilty of the personal and perhaps selfish time she spent online, away from her family and domestic obligations.

Kimiko’s feelings of guilt are reflective of a particular Japanese discourse of society (for lack of a better word in English). In the Japanese context, this social world is represented by the Japanese indigenous term *seken*. The most basic definition of this word is society, but the term seems to encompass something more immersive. Inoue identifies *seken* as the traditional view of the world as human relationships, which may be more analogous to the Western concept community (2007). The suffix *-tei* is often attached to this to infer “the honourable appearance as viewed by the surrounding world” (Lebra 1984:154). Martinez notes that the word is Buddhist in origin and she confirms the somewhat ambiguous nature of the word in that it:

...means various things: the world, society, life, people, the public. Its usage often implies a person’s awareness of others’ opinion and can be felt as a very heavy weight. It is ‘society’ in its more Victorian usage: the panoptic eye that evaluates people and judges their actions; it is the ‘them’ of ‘they say’” (2004: 15).

I am introducing the possibility here that *seken* as a social discourse takes on new significance through internet use. The internet is seen by my interlocutors as a means to explore expressions of community as well as a location of pleasure. The manner in which *seken* is reproduced and performed via internet practice becomes part of the process of building not just a sense of place or home but also a process of integrating the self within that context. The collective yet individual experience of the internet

makes this an intriguing format for the exploration and enjoyment of the social world by my interlocutors. By transgressing the boundaries intimated by an unknowable audience, the internet becomes a site for an imagined yet real authority and the strategic and productive play of power by Japanese women who generate creative practices to undermine (in Kimiko's case) this authority (Foucault 1980,1981)

In this respect, Kimiko's expression of embarrassment over her perceived over-indulgence was tempered by her admission that she could not control this particular impulse. It was completely out of her hands at the time, however, she has been sure to never repeat such an indulgence again, as this would lead to undue neglect of her family. Kae quickly came to her defence after her admission by reassuring Kimiko that "maybe you didn't notice that you were missing that much Japanese culture, and the language." This expression of guilt is in clear contrast with Radway's Western interlocutors who felt that time spent reading romance novels was a "declaration of independence" (1987:7). Radway notes how the event of reading is a multiply determined and contradictory expression of escape, a notion that Kimiko has embodied as a sense of guilt driven by her unstoppable desire to watch online Japanese programmes.

It can be argued that Kimiko seems to have been imbued with the sense of *seken* in such a way that her anxiety was increased over her unstoppable online viewing and this in turn led her to acknowledge the event to the group. She even felt compelled to implicate Kazuko as an accomplice in online viewing in order to give sufficient rationale for her practice. Kimiko's current viewing habits are a reminder that this is just one example of how one household is organised, and indicates that thinking of household organisation as a uniformly constructed social practice must be in part a fallacy as all households are organised differently to suit the distinctive and individual needs of its occupants. Kimiko's husband is fluent enough in Japanese to sometimes join her in her soap marathons and in any case *Tudou* often streams with English subtitles. In addition, the computer desktop is located in their bedroom which serves as Kimiko's retreat, which allows her to connect with her interests. It is here in this particularly private space that Kimiko also reads the *Yomiuri* (a Japanese newspaper) online as well as BBC news, and ESPC which is an East Scotland property search site. Kimiko was not actively searching for a new home but at the time of this

interview she enjoyed browsing through the various properties on offer, comparing property prices and just generally having a look through the photos that accompany the property descriptions.

Kimiko's expression of her leisure can be contrasted with Yumi's internet use in the Manchester area, which is sparse, limited and much more utilitarian by comparison. Yumi rarely spends more than two or three hours online during the weekend, sometimes only an hour a day during the week. She has a prescribed set of activities ("I have a set routine") that she sees to online and at the moment there is little deviation from these activities. First and foremost is the checking and responding to personal emails. This is followed by a quick look at the *Asahi* news website in order to keep up with the latest goings on in her home country, then the BBC news site ("I check the news, then the weather"). This is followed by a search of various job websites as she was looking to change jobs during the course of the research project.

The search for employment more in keeping with her level of education was an ongoing source of frustration for her. Yumi holds a Master's degree in Educational Psychology but feels that she is currently underemployed and under-utilised as a special needs classroom assistant at her local secondary school in Marple, a leafy suburb in the greater Manchester area. Whilst she does find working with the children to be ultimately fulfilling, she often expressed the concern that the economic situation and public sector budget cuts and pay wage freezes that have been in place since the national debt went into free fall in 2009⁸ were too much of a barrier in her search for more appropriate employment. "Of course I enjoy working with the kids but it would be nice if I could get a job more in keeping with my (recent) degree. There are lots of people in training at the moment but they are struggling to find jobs with local authorities." The family desktop unit is located in the dining room, separate from the television in the small but cosy living room. Yumi tends to use the internet after dinner, while her husband and young son share some time together before the child's bedtime. After her young son T is in bed, Yumi prefers to watch British television dramas with her husband, thus breaking the isolation from her short daily spell in front of the computer screen.

⁸ Source: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2010/oct/18/deficit-debt-government-borrowing-data#> Retrieved 29.07.13

Both of these women have distinctive approaches to their internet use, however I would argue that both Yumi and Kimiko use the internet in ways that allow them to experiment with and extend how they view themselves as Japanese women residing within the boundaries of the UK as they derive meaning and pleasure from sourcing material that is relevant to them. Kimiko in particular can be seen to exemplify an oppositional position that struggles to balance her need to explore the new world of Japanese media texts online with her role as wife and mother. She seeks out the symbolic resources that will sustain how she views herself at any particular moment as she makes her way through cyberspace and its infinite resources (Hall and Du Gay 1996). Kimiko's use can be compared with Yumi's business-like approach to utilising the more practical elements that the internet has to offer. Yumi seems to be a more pragmatic individual, this is expressed in her search for that first foothold in the shape of a new job that would allow her to take on the career that she feels best suited for.

Yumi and Kimiko use the internet with differing outcomes in mind. I believe that how these women use the space provided online becomes something altogether more organic for them than just 'using the computer'. The internet becomes a natural extension for self and the drive for self fulfilment. The daily repetitive use of the internet and the time that they allocate and the place in the home where the access is situated are factors that they have agreed in conjunction with other family members and reflects how the needs of the family might be best met, despite Kimiko's contradictory position. These women are embodying a specific social practice that reproduces how they view themselves as Japanese individuals, able to negotiate two languages and exploit this ability as they see fit. The self is simultaneously being reflexively made through such media use, of course in conjunction with other personal life experiences, and as Thompson points out, this process of self-formation is increasingly "nourished by mediated symbolic materials, greatly expanding the range of options available to individuals and loosening – without destroying – the connection between self-formation and shared locale" (1995:207).

6.5 Keeping Up With Japan

Most of the women used the internet to read Japanese news websites, and preferred the newspaper sites of their parents' newspaper choice. Is this one way that diasporic

culture is recreated and embodied, through reading the same material that is infused with the political mindset as determined by their parents, or their fathers? Both Asan and Yumi read *Asahi* online, a newspaper with a stance to the political left. Asan says that she follows this website because that is what her parents read and she “doesn’t feel right” reading another paper, even online. Skov and Moeran point out that print newspapers in Japan contribute to the larger project of national standardisation through publication practices that allow for some regional variation, but this imagined homogeneity is thrown into sharp relief with advertisement practices in other media such as magazines, where the rhetoric of a female individualism serves to inspire and initiate consumerism on a grand scale (1995). As media savvy young women in Japan, it could be argued that my participants took such rhetoric as an inspiration for looking outside of local and national boundaries for personal fulfilment. Wakako had a very specific reason for her daily consultation of the *Yomiuri* online. Apart from the general news and tips on health, beauty and seasonal foods that she favoured because these were specific to Japanese people, she also sought out the agony pages, whereby the Japanese public is invited to respond to the problems and issues of those who write in requesting help in resolving whatever difficulty they are dealing with. Wakako was often touched by the kindness and thoughtfulness of these answers, and she took a degree of national pride in the sensitivity and intelligence of those who would reply.

There are also examples of my interlocutors turning to the internet in order to contact professionals in Japan to deal with personal concerns that these women felt might be dealt with inadequately or misunderstood here in the UK. When Mariko’s dog Beni fell ill in August 2011 Mariko quickly became frustrated over the local veterinarian’s treatment of both herself and the dog. As Beni’s condition began to deteriorate, she felt that the vet was not being sensitive enough to either her own or the dog’s feelings. Beni is a large American Akita⁹ and the vet suggested that she be muzzled during the initial examinations as she was known to growl if her legs were touched. Mariko took this precaution personally, and chose to interpret this action to mean that the vet was not able to cope with a wide range of dog behaviours and that her dog could not be

⁹ There are two types of Akita recognised by UK breeders, the original Japanese Akita and a separate designation for the larger American Akita. The American Akita is more common in this country, with only a few dog breeders specialising in the smaller Japanese Akita.

trusted. Out of frustration and keen to communicate her concerns to a Japanese audience she posted about the issue on *mixi* and Mariko was put in touch with a vet in Japan, a friend of a friend in Tokyo, with whom she began a correspondence in order to obtain what she felt would be a more breed friendly and sympathetic diagnosis of her dog's health issues. Despite the ongoing communication this vet was understandably unable to offer a coherent diagnosis without seeing the dog, and in the end Beni had to be sent to a specialist treatment centre in Kent before being diagnosed and treated for a severe intestinal inflammation.

Yumiko sought out the advice of an online Japanese doctor when her eldest daughter contracted a high fever because she felt that a Japanese family physician would understand her situation better than her local British GP. She had to pay online for this service but felt that it was worthwhile not just because of the ease of communicating with a doctor in her native language but also because of the added layer of cultural understanding. She explained to me that:

There is a Japanese doctor's website, I can email them for information, that is a really, really useful service. Sometimes I find it difficult to discuss things with English doctors, because I don't know the right word or something. I didn't go to an English GP for the first two years that I was here because I was too scared.

Yumiko felt that a Japanese doctor would recognize how she felt about various treatments and medications, and her anxiety over the children's ill health, precisely because he was Japanese. This was not connected to any specialist physiological needs that she felt her daughters might have because they were genetically half Japanese, but because of the closer bonds of communication.

Lebra (1984) observed that the state of a child's health is a primary source of anxiety for Japanese mothers (and what is a pet dog if not a four-legged child). For older generations in Japan, childhood illnesses were dealt with at home, via the administration of a domestic supply of Chinese herbs, gentle massage, the recitation of Buddhist sutras and rice gruel (*ibid*). But as with much else, the onset of modernity has introduced an improvement in medical facilities along with a degree of socialised

medicine in Japan, and this has resulted in such traditional practices giving way to modern medical procedures. The concerned mother will now visit a local clinic or hospital at the first sign of a child feeling unwell. It is more than understandable then how a mother more fluent and at ease in expressing herself in Japanese would prefer to take the time and added expense of researching and contacting a health professional in her native country.

Wakako, by contrast, used her time online in order to maintain some idea of current social trends in her native country. She explained that “I research the kind of things I should be eating in Japan. Our diet is different in Japan, we eat different things to Europeans so I research health and beauty things.” Later in the discussion she elaborated on her use of the internet in this way, to “watch YouTube to look at exercise videos, so for information, travel, and just to see what is happening in Japan. England is the same, but Japan I wanted to know how it is changing, what we should be eating, and what is happening, and [then] I can feel like I am there.” It could be argued that Wakako’s use of the internet in this way is reflective of a *nihonjinron* perspective, that is, the particular discourse that argues for the uniqueness of Japanese society (cf. Befu 1992, Lebra 2004, Yoshino 1992). However, I argue that Wakako is simply expressing her social nostalgia for the motherland and this is why she prefers to explore reference points that she is familiar with yet feels excluded from in Edinburgh. Again Kimiko stressed that “sometimes it’s much easier to really, really understand things in your own language. You understand more.” Wakako agreed with this assessment, adding that “it’s more comfortable listening to things in your own language.” There is also the more practical side to internet use and that is the maintenance of family ties through traditional practices. Eiko mentioned that her “brother got married recently. It’s sort of Japanese culture to send the message, in a message card, you can send the message card directly to the wedding place, and I thought, ‘oh, I have to do this manually’, but I found that you can do it easily on the internet. There is one company in Osaka they do the service, I thought I would have to go and buy a present for my brother and my sister-in-law but you can also do that on the internet. You can just order it online.”

These narratives of internet practice indicate that the research cannot be limited to an encapsulation of reader and text interpretation because these simple boundaries are

transgressed by functionality (Livingstone 2004). These women provide several clear examples of how the global reach of the internet can be harnessed to address personal and individual needs through the flexibility of the cosmopolitan state of mind.

6.6 Working Nine to Five – and Beyond

A straightforward use of the internet is one which exploits its position as a tool and instrument of labour, a means towards establishing and maintaining a livelihood and a career in Britain. The internet is used for specific work purposes (although it must be stressed, not exclusively), primarily as a means of increasing the professional profiles of Mariko, Chika and Asan. Mariko advertises her tutoring service on LinkedIn and also has a link on the Japan Society page of Japanese tutors available in the southeast area of London. These efforts are specifically directed to her newly (at the time this research was conducted) established career as a language teacher but Mariko is also a prolific blogger in Japanese and used one blog when she was married, established a second, now defunct blog as a separated woman and mum struggling with her new status (both of these blogs have now been dismantled), and now keeps a *mixi* page as well as a Facebook account.

The second blog, established after her separation, was called *rikon run*, with *rikon* being the Japanese word for divorce. This blog was begun as a result of a dream that she had, and she equated the need for this blog to something physical: “It’s like when you have a really bad stomach ache. You know that it will go away, but you still have to do something to help it get better.” This blog was a means for Mariko to vent the emotional suffering she was enduring at the time and it ran for about a year and a half after her separation. Mariko’s physical need to resolve her feelings over her marital discord can be equated to what Lebra identifies as “the inner self” as a facet of the self “that provides a fixed core for self-identity and subjectivity” (1992:112). She notes that this notion is expressed as localised in the belly, *hara* (or the heart, *kokoro*), and that it “while the outer (presentational) self is socially circumscribed, the *kokoro* can be free, spontaneous and even asocial.” (ibid). Mariko used the blog as a form of self-help, as a means to orient herself to her unexpected change in a society that she felt forced to remain in because of her children. Within the context of the blog, she was free to address her actual pain and frustration to a Japanese audience – she did not blog in English. In effect, Mariko bared her inner self to the world of the audience, or

seken, and used this presence as a means to better understand and accept the conditions she now found herself in.

Chika has a more expansive means of raising her teaching profile as she has been teaching for much longer and has her own classes at City Lit as well as freelance classes that she organizes for those students who wish to continue with Japanese beyond what is available at the City Lit. Her website <http://www.bhm.shiawase.co.uk/> offers homework updates, photos and messages to keep her students motivated and enthusiastic about Japanese. She likewise included updates on her DJing engagements in London and listings for the infrequent appearances of the alternative music and performance collective *The Frank Chickens*, of which she became a member when she moved to London. Chika stated that her primary motivation for everything that she does at the moment stems from her need to communicate. She does not view herself as an artist or a creator of anything despite the very creative element that she brings to her activities such as her language classes which include her own drawings that explicate grammar rules or the little booklets she writes and draws in order to encourage her students to practise their *hiragana* and *katakana* reading skills. She has turned to teaching Japanese not just as a means to an income but as a way to create networks (her term) with and between others. It is the creation and sustenance of these networks of friends, and now family since her wedding in March 2012, which she feels is integral to her participation in, and contribution to, society.

Asan is a committed Apple product fan and customer because she has become accustomed to the products through many years of using them as a musician. She has three Apple computer products, two Macs and one Macbook Air. She was looking forward to the latest OS release (Lion) from Apple at the time of our interviews. She helpfully rated the level of importance that she places on her online activities as follows: Twitter, Facebook, shopping then the news. She will also do any personal research such as holiday details and books all her travel and accommodation online. She is an interesting case study in that as a media personality she has taken care to separate her online entertainer persona from her online personal persona. She maintains two separate Twitter accounts for just this purpose. She might be considered to be a somewhat exceptional Japanese woman in that she has been able to conduct and sustain a career in the music industry (mostly in Japan) whilst being a

resident in the UK. She is married but childless, with a husband who is sympathetic to her need to travel to and from Japan (she can make up to five trips a year) and completely supportive of her career. He is an accountant in London. Asan no longer has parents but still has aunts, uncles and her brothers in Tokyo with whom she maintains regular contact, however, she only occasionally uses Skype as the time difference is much too difficult to negotiate – “So not so much.” Asan uses social media in both Japanese and English to promote her music and her engagements and keep her fans informed of her activities in Japan. Asan reiterated this compelling desire for creating and maintaining networks in a discussion about Twitter. In her musician persona she maintains her account conscientiously through frequent updates and responses to both her fans and detractors. When I asked why she invested so much time and energy on her Twitter account she vigorously replied that “you have to keep the network going, you have to expand the network. If you don’t reply or post anything then the connection just dies.”

Eiko described a different approach to integrating work and internet use. I was aware that she combined her role as mother with that of a freelance graphic artist, but I was surprised to hear that she was involved in other freelance and personal projects. Eiko said of her internet use that it:

...can be between one hour, or three hours – it depends on the day. I spend more time on the internet forums, I don’t really watch dramas on the internet. Because I am a (freelance) entertainment writer, I started collecting the information, people with the same opinion, so I use it more as a communication tool with the people who have the same interests; it’s good to communicate with people in Japanese. They can talk more honestly about their opinion and updating my information about everything...The work comes every month. The deadline is the end of the month. It comes the second and third week of the month so when I am not working I don’t use the internet that much, but come the second or third week of the month, it could be four or five hours just staying on the internet forum. Me: And is that just for doing research? Eiko: Its more of a personal thing. I’m making two blogs, I’m having two blogs about my research, just really something personal, just internet search.

She did not clarify further on the nature of these projects, and upon hearing that there was a personal element to this I was reluctant to pry any further. Both Eiko and Kae were at ease with internet shopping and praised the convenience of this particular facility. Eiko began this discussion by noting that, "...when my second one (child) was born, we didn't have anyone to help us, and my husband offered to do the shopping but he had other things to do, so we used...I think it was Safeway's internet shopping." Kae was rather resourceful more with her internet shopping:

Sometimes I use the internet shopping and send to the UK. It costs, but sometimes it's worth it. It's a Japanese online shopping mall, and they started to send across the world, to anyone, and it really costs, but if you want something from Japan its worth it...I use *Tenso* dot com. I buy things from Amazon JP [Japan] and then I use *Tenso* to send it to the UK. I buy a lot of CD's and DVD's and I change the amount a little bit, and then *Tenso* will send it to the UK for cheaper, because you know, the VAT costs a lot!"

Kae was the only one in the group to use Japanese shopping sites with such frequency, whereas the others commented on the high price of importing domestic items from Japan to the UK. It is possible that this reflects more on her status as the newest arrival of the group. Kimiko used similar facilities for leisure purposes, saying that "you can order hotels and flights and *shinkansen* (Japanese high speed rail service) from here and it's great."

Wakako agreed, and added the linguistic advantage introduced by the internet, "so the internet is a big help, because I don't speak English very well, so I don't like using the phone so much. It's easier on the internet, and then you also have a permanent record." Kimiko agreed, stating that "the phone is hard, isn't it." Wakako added: "Yes it's more than hard." The difficulty of using the phone, and conducting a completely understandable conversation in real time in a second language, should not be underestimated. The efficacy of the internet in easing the way for the diasporic, or transnational community, is clearly of some importance in making the individual feel reassured and perhaps in control. Thus the internet provides a manageable and

understandable means of getting things done. This was explained in detail by Kazuko:

When I read things in English on the internet, it gives me time to understand. But when I am speaking one to one, its harder because I can't have enough time to process information and if I am asked to answer, I usually say yes and then I regret [it]. But the internet gives time to decide, and compare information, and control it.

The expressed need to communicate and establish networks with and between others as outlined in the above comments is in contrast with the erotic self expression that Kelsky identifies as a key source for the modern defection of young Japanese women to the West (2001). If Kelsky's respondents are relocating Westward in search of a less repressive personal space then it is revealing that they are also investing time and energy in recreating and maintaining the social networks and communities in Japan to which they are accustomed. These routes and recreated webs of communication may be seen to be framed by the media technologies, however they are not framed *because* of the media. The paths of communication that are favoured by Wakako or Eiko are chosen because these women find them to be the best fit for their needs. All human interaction is framed by culture and community and the take up of new technologies reflects how the individual views her position within her social networks (Miller and Sinanan 2012). As producers of meaning these women are looking to establish continuities within their pre-existing social networks, and the internet provides an efficacious means of accomplishing this.

Yumiko has a more functional use for the internet, as she was once quite limited to the amount of time she could, or would be willing to spend, online. In 2010, she spoke of having "only one computer, one laptop, he (her husband) takes it to the office so during the day I don't have any computer. So when he comes back, I can use it a little bit, but then its dinner time, then bath time, the kids go to bed and reading time. So I probably have only one hour to use his computer." However, by the time of our final interview at the end of 2011 she had acquired her own tablet and smartphone. This was purchased primarily for her post-earthquake visit to Sendai so that the girls would have some means of entertainment and so that they could "Skype with daddy." Upon

her return, the tablet was being put to use to help the girls with their Japanese and for recipes in the kitchen, reflecting the quotidian nature that these appliances have now achieved in the home.

6.7 The Internet as a Network of Networks

The internet is used in this context as a broad term to encompass all online activity including its use for personal pleasure as well as its various uses for communication and purposeful searching that demonstrate its multifaceted nature. Miller and Slater note that the internet has a capacity that allows for the “performative character of all social realities and identities” depending on the intellectual project of the individual user (2000:5). I would argue that this is a defining feature of the internet and it is exploited by each of these women in specific and personal ways that enables them to place themselves within the permeable boundaries and flows of nation and culture (ibid). The multilayered and subtextual character of their internet activities is a component of the internet’s nature as a technological network of networks.

To refer to the internet as a “network of networks” is common enough usage in that it is described as such on various wiki type web pages¹⁰ but I am underpinning this description of the internet with Hannerz’s use of this wording to describe the global ecumene (1992). He suggests that a network ethnography outlines how people become drawn into a more globalised existence and then progresses to illustrate how they may next become involved in more complex transnational linkages. This process is what I identify as a tendency towards cosmopolitanism in chapter one. The “heterogeneous sets of long-distance relationships” which serve to “organise culture” on a daily basis for the women I interviewed are linked through personal sequences of diverse choices that become less bounded and more varied thanks to the very same characteristics that mark the nature of cyberspace (ibid:51). For example, in order to consider the ways in which these women use internet telephony or Skyping, the elements of recreation and the importance of maintaining personal domestic relationships are just two factors that must also be taken into account. The activity of watching online Japanese dramas or other Japanese programmes can be regarded as a

¹⁰ One example of this usage is the notoriously non-academic Wikipedia, which provides an overview that defines the internet as consisting of a vast array of commercial, political, academic and social networks that are linked privately and publically through innumerable devices, hence the description as a “network of networks”. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet> Retrieved 30.07.13.

conscious act of subverting or circumventing of Japanese piracy laws while acquiring something material (if transitory in the form of a downloadable programme) for personal gratification. Or for example, in the case of Asan, the internet becomes a working site, a place of active construction that she must attend to and maintain. Her various social networking sites are a necessary facet of her persona as a musician and crucial to maintaining visibility in a commercial and communication driven industry.

Appadurai (1996) implicates the electronic media as the primary force that works in conjunction with migration to powerfully influence the work of the imagination as individuals and their symbolic representations move across time and space. This application is taken into account in Miller and Slater's ethnography of the internet in Trinidad which provides an in-depth description of how the net is used and consumed in identity forming ways by various individuals and groups that characterise the multiple ways of being "Trini" (2000). With this particular ethnography in mind I want to shift the focus from the actual websites that my Japanese informants were looking at and consider how accessing the internet on a regular basis as part of daily life becomes an expression of the Japanese self. It is an inherent quality of networks that while they work towards the establishment of an increasing number of connections, they also serve to impose spatial and social limitations, and so it is in cyberspace. Morley observes that what is actually emerging from the internet is a complex combination of mediated and place-based exchanges to which the urban centre, or rather the technologically enabled centre, is crucial (2000). He further adds that these urbanised hubs provide an "interweaving of physical, face-to-face, and electronic connections and networks is the key to their vibrancy" (ibid:188). From this perspective, accessing the internet on a device in the home becomes something almost instinctual, a natural extension of how to be social in the twenty-first century, and the Japanese women I interviewed reflect individual differences in its use. As a technology for the self, I have indicated how the Japanese discourse of *seken* operates as an unseen system of power that still offers some regulation as to how my interviewees constituted themselves online despite living in Britain (Foucault 1988, Gauntlett 2002).

The questions that arise from a more organic perception of the internet would point to the role of the internet in shaping sociability among Japanese women in the UK. But

it would seem that this is a backwards approach if I am situating internet use as a technology for the self. What my interlocutors indicate is that the internet provides new channels of sociability that are exploited or ignored depending on how the individual places herself, or is placed, within their social networks both here in the UK and in Japan. For example, Yumiko referred to the lack of opportunity for online engagement with her parents. Yet at the time of our interviews her sister was living with her parents in Akita and she was communicating with her sister via email. The lack of online contact may have been to save her aged parents the difficulty and embarrassment of trying to communicate in a more direct manner with their granddaughters, or perhaps because Skyping was not an option on her sister's computer. The variety of sociability expressed here is not just the result of online engagement, or possibilities that can only be achieved in front of a pixellated screen but rather part of the magic of being a socially networked human engaged in the pursuit and creation of self and culture.

The expansion of a technologically mediated culture has expedited new levels of networks of communal engagement, as in how the development of the printed page triggered some degree of social development by inspiring ideas of how (Western) society could be. There is evidence that my informants were communicating widely and extensively about the internet to each other via face to face communication. This is an example of networking on many layers as the women communicate about internet sites to each other (a meta narrative of the internet?), as well as between each other and other non-Japanese friends and family members on various social networking sites. The internet seems to be another facet in the desire to network, to build connections, to participate in the grand project of communication.

6.8 Conclusion

With the development of technological innovations from the printing press onwards the production and circulation of symbolic forms established a 'mediatisation of culture' which in turn initiated the cultural transformations associated with modern social life (Thompson 1995). And there is no doubt that information technologies are bringing about fundamental transformations in the structure and meaning of modern society and culture (Escobar 1996). But a cultural identity is not found merely in the production and one sided transmission of a state-endorsed programme from pre-

approved sources such as broadcast stations and publishing houses, it is constituted just as equally in the ongoing communication, production and use of symbolic forms (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). The transnational Japanese women of this study have shown themselves to be more than proficient at various levels of online participation.

The internet is utilised as both a resource and a tool, as a means of providing the information necessary for a more efficient life in Britain. It also serves to fuel the diasporic imagination because it keeps the women in touch with the Japan they have left behind. It enables them to interact with the Japan of their past in the form of contact with family, access to texts, communication and information venues and also serves to provide a foothold in the Japan of the present. The importance of conducting these relationships in their native language cannot be underestimated despite the fluency and confidence that they expressed in English. The internet also provides a forum for new expressions of the social self, a self that can be seen to be articulated by indigenous Japanese discourses yet ultimately determined by their home environment in Britain.

For these women, the multi-tasking of the media environment is a fact of life (Deuze 2011). Theorists such as Deuze (*ibid*), and Hardt and Negri (2000) refer to the blurring of boundaries between people and media as between consumers and producers as a new condition in the human experience. But to speak to these women is to begin to appreciate their interaction with the rich and diverse range of resources made available to them through the internet and it becomes apparent that the reliance on online access and its capabilities and its myriad of uses are no longer new, but are fully integrated into the routines of daily life, as much as eating or breathing.

Chapter Seven: Japanese Dramas in the UK: Access and Inclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that the position of Japanese dramas in the lives of my interlocutors is part of the construction of self as subject in the world and as such becomes part of the practices of self-constitution (Hall and du Gay 1996). The emphasis on the native language which was touched upon in the previous chapter becomes an important focal point here as part of the embodiment and performance of the Japanese self and the negotiation of the domestic space. By the very nature of online activity, watching dramas is a personal undertaking conducted within the private space between the viewer (or viewers, in some instances) and the computer screen and the personal decision of what *doramas* to watch enhances this intimacy between the viewer and the text. The textual selections in themselves reflect one way in which gender is constructed at home (Butler 1990). In turn, the space between the computer and subject transforms into a female gendered space in opposition to the ‘traditional’ view of computers as masculine technology (Hirsch 1998). This gendering is also relative in that such a dichotomy is becoming increasingly blurred or even irrelevant as the use of these technologies become integrated into daily life but it is still a valid perspective with respect to some of my interlocutors as will be discussed later. When using such technology within the family home, the space created between the user and the technology becomes the focus for the continual negotiation of daily activities for both the individual and the family and this practice was acknowledged by most of the women to whom I spoke. This negotiation is part of the social practice of media use, and again reminds us that such use can only be rendered analytically noteworthy when framed by interpersonal social networks.

The category of Japanese dramas consists of serialised television episodes in a variety of genres such as, but not limited to, romance, historical, medical, comedy, etc., and are produced by all the major Japanese networks and are broadcast either in the morning as *asadora* or in the evening as *dorama*. It is worth noting the difference between the evening drama and the *asadora*, or morning drama, as each has their own specific target demographic. The *asadora* is broadcast in the morning with a repeat showing at noon and the audience is by and large housewives (Harvey 1995). By

contrast, the evening dramas produced by the major networks are designed to appeal to a broader television audience and are intended to encourage family viewing.

The women I interviewed were watching evening dramas that had been uploaded onto internet-based video sharing sites and internet television sites so that fans and any other interested viewers can choose individual episodes and watch at their leisure. Many of these sites are run by and for the fans of particular genres and will often encourage the online community to comment and otherwise participate on their forums but this element of social participation held no interest for my interlocutors. As in the previous chapter, once again there was a range of practices regarding drama viewing among the Edinburgh group. At the time of the interview in September 2010, Kimiko and Kazuko were the most enthusiastic followers of Japanese dramas. As outlined in the previous chapter, it was because of Kimiko's attempt to track down missed episodes of the American television comedy-drama series *Ugly Betty* that she inadvertently stumbled across the link to *Tudou*, the Chinese video sharing service. She then passed on this information to Kazuko who became an enthusiastic viewer of her own preferred genre of medical dramas. Kae watched dramas as well, preferring the more modern settings of the so-called trendy dramas,¹ but Wakako and Eiko did not watch dramas nor were they interested in pursuing the possibility of watching. As far as the internet viewers were concerned, watching drama episodes online did not represent a breach in the law nor did they take into account Japanese copyright restrictions that have resulted in countless clips of Japanese television being withdrawn from video sharing sites such as YouTube. These episodes are freely available on the internet through a simple Google search and the uploading sites that they are accessed from are straightforward regarding the content available and the source of this content.

Kimiko and Kae felt very enthusiastic about participating in the viewing of Japanese dramas and outlined the various websites used to enable viewing regardless of questions of legality. In fact more than half of the women I spoke to expressed ambivalence towards dramas, and I will argue in this chapter that the decision to participate in *doromas* or not reflects how they position themselves, and how they are

¹ So-called "trendy dramas" are those that depict modern relationships and current issues in urban settings. This connotation was given to this particular style of drama beginning in the late 1980's (Iwabuchi 2004).

positioned, in British and Japanese society. Watching, or not watching, dramas in the native language reaffirms how these women have created their own identifications with ethnicity, gender and class over the course of their lifetimes. This process is of course ongoing, unfixed and imbued with a sense of personal ethic (Foucault 1988).

7.2 To Watch or Not to Watch

A total of five of my interviewees, Eiko and Wakako in Edinburgh, Chika and Asan in London and Yumi in the Manchester area, did not watch online dramas at all in the UK, preferring to employ alternative online means of explicitly connecting with Japanese culture and their ethnic self which was not reliant on an engagement with dramas. Eiko, Chika and Asan preferred a form of active two-way communication with friends, family and the wider public through personal blogs or social networking sites as discussed in the previous chapter. As discussed in the previous chapter, Asan in particular maintained two separate accounts on both Twitter and Facebook as she had a specific entertainment persona for engaging with her fanbase. Wakako describes her disinterest in soaps by commenting on her overall lack interest in ‘the new’:

I am completely different from the people who watch drama. I don’t look for the drama. I don’t look for information or try to find out something new. I like old television or when I go back to Japan I do karaoke, that kind of thing. I like to remember how do you sing that old song or how do you do that old dance move or try to make a funny face. I always try to go back to the past, not like Kimiko-san or Kazuko-san, they say it’s something new, something interesting is coming up (such as a drama series), but for me I always go back to the past.

Whereas Wakako expressly rejected the pursuit of television dramas because of her interest in more nostalgic cultural forms, Yumi was not interested in viewing any element of Japanese popular culture.

When asked if she watched any Japanese television or dramas Yumi dismissed the idea with a wave of her hand and in her soft Manchester burr said: “Oh no, I’m not interested in any of that. I just prefer to follow the Japanese news.” Yumi seemed to

prefer to connect with her ethnicity online through a quick perusal of the *Asahi* news homepage as discussed in the previous chapter. In London, Asan did not watch any Japanese television and was not interested due to the amount of time this would require on her behalf. When I broached the topic with her she replied: “No, I don’t watch any Japanese television online. I don’t have the time to dedicate to watching so many episodes of the same story. But now that you mention it, maybe I should look into it.” I expect that given her dedication to her music career that she did not pursue this further. Chika was not interested in television programming of any description, preferring to use her various online activities for communication with her friends and language students.

The Edinburgh group always met in the same location as chosen by Wakako because of its central and easily accessible location for all the participants, with a quiet interior and reasonable bar rates. Wakako, at 52 and the oldest member and coordinator of the group, was always deferred to in conversations and she had no qualms about interrupting ongoing discussions to provide her own perspective. This was never at a cost to the ongoing conversation and would often lead to new avenues of questions, such as when she declared her interest in the older elements of Japanese popular culture. She took on the role of *senpai* (elder colleague) and the others accepted her in that position, for example, she would indicate to the others where to sit at the interviewing table and make sure that everyone had placed a drink request. Wakako would even disregard my own suggestions for seating arrangements as she explained to me that as an administrative project manager she had taken courses on this sort of thing and knew best, despite my mild protestations that it would be difficult for my recording device to catch all of the discussions if so-and-so sat there.

Kimiko and Kazuko, both in their mid-forties, formed the core of the group as they had known each other the longest, having met through their administrative jobs fifteen years earlier. Kimiko had met Wakako while both worked for a short spell for Edinburgh Council, and Wakako had met Eiko when the latter was also working a short term placement at the council offices. Kae and Eiko met when their sons were starting at nursery two years prior to our interview and were the youngest members of the group, still in their mid-thirties. They seemed comfortable with their position of youngest members at the table, which allowed them enough leeway to chat between

themselves while the interviews were ongoing, going to the dessert trolley to order cakes and indulging in tall creamy coffee drinks. This was not childish or immature behaviour by any means, but it certainly contrasted with the more serious or less distracted demeanour of the older women.

It was noted by all that watching dramas was a personal experience, bordering on indulgent when there are always chores at home that need addressing. When asked to be more specific about the overall appeal of the dramas, Kazuko remarked:

I was wondering, how it was I became so hooked on the Japanese dramas on the internet. I watched a large amount of British drama but [I have] never taken to them. The thing was individual [short pause], the difference is in the characters, what I mean is the Japanese dramas have almost fixed themes. They have comfort themes rather than individual, you know, Japanese popular dramas have this set formula, where the characters are helping each other or trying to get to know each other...that is the idea but it is something comforting and reassuring. The funny thing is, sometimes I feel that I can watch British drama and I wonder why the story can't go beyond that... they [the characters] don't really help each other.

Kazuko seemed to suggest that there is also a nostalgia for the kind of culturally specific storytelling that she feels most familiar with, themes of support and positivity that are explicated by characters who have a clear moral agenda that is understood by the shared audience.

Kae continued along this train of thought:

My husband said exactly the same thing yesterday because my husband is a lecturer in the field of India and Japan and that is why he learned Japanese and sometimes we watch Japanese dramas together. He noticed that Japanese drama has more positive side and more optimistic side, compared to the British drama, because the British drama is more realistic. But it is sometimes too much for me, and he noticed that the realistic side makes me uncomfortable. I watch drama because I want to be relaxed. I don't want to

see reality so much! But in Japanese drama I don't have to worry so much about that. And he noticed that that I enjoy it and [this also means that] he can be relaxed, to see that I enjoy the drama. He said that Japanese drama has a more optimistic side. Even though they are about reality in the end it's going to show the ideal life or the ideal conclusion so that the people who watch can be relaxed, to continue to watch and that makes the huge difference between the Japanese drama and the British drama. That's why I still feel comfortable to watch Japanese drama. You can be relaxed.

Kae was not the only participant to be put off by the grittiness of British dramas. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Yumiko also found that despite her determination to master the English language during her first few years in the UK the English soaps were "too harsh and I am not so [sic.] a person." She instead turned her attention to Australian soaps and chat shows as she felt these better suited her interests. The perceived graphic nature of British television dramas was deemed to be a serious impediment to the pleasure and enjoyment of watching dramas at the point of broadcast.

The evaluation and rejection of British dramas is more than just an expression of 'taste' as Bourdieu defined it (1984). These women most certainly have the capacity (via education and class) to appropriate any example of British popular culture if they so choose. I believe that Yumiko, Kae and the others are rejecting these particular depictions of British values and symbolic meanings because they challenge the kind of televisual tropes that they feel are the ideal viewing material. The preference then is to "relax", or lose oneself, with visual material that evokes a specific cultural zone via the intimacy of personal viewing, and the desire to achieve this personal state of absorption is what drives the impetus to seek out dramas from home. What is interesting to note, however, is the repeated use of the word "relax" to imply the personal enjoyment and distraction from daily concerns that takes place when the women allowed themselves the opportunity to become completely focussed on the viewing experience. This experience, and its implications for the self and for family life, will be examined later in the chapter.

7.3 Eiko and the Mean and Sour Girl

Eiko did not watch dramas nor was she interested in watching dramas. The experience was something she connected to another generation, to her grandmother who always watched the *Getsu-9*, which is the heavily hyped Monday night drama broadcast at 9pm that serves as a seasonal ratings winner for Fuji-TV². Her mother preferred the dramas on NHK, Japan's public service network who annually produce a long running series on historical figures called the *taiga* (literally 'great river', the meaning here being 'river of time') *dorama*:

I sometimes feel uncomfortable about Japanese dramas, I was, like, a teenager in the 1990s and those days the women interviewed [on television programmes] were pretty and sweet, they would be admired, and same in TV drama, and I was completely the opposite. And I can be quite mean and sour! I was quite a moody teenager. All the women were so pretty and sweet, and I wasn't like that.

Eiko's perception of herself as a Japanese woman recognises that there is potentially an unlimited number of expressions of gender, and despite the attempts of all the networks to offer a modern and updated portrayal of Japanese womanhood that still pulls in ratings and advertisers, there will always be a segment of the population who choose not to acquiesce to such portrayals, or role models. Eiko easily excluded herself from the experience of identifying with the characters in the dramas because she felt she was in essence the opposite of what was portrayed on television, that is, mean and sour instead of gentle and sweet. Her rejection of more mainstream portrayals of Japanese womanhood is indicative of how the configuration of gender roles in Japan can still be felt as repressive and restrictive (cf. Benedict 1946, Nakane 1970).

It must be noted, however, that Eiko was brought up in a rural locale and raised by her widowed mother. In such an environment it is understandable that normative family structures and role types would have been adjusted to accommodate circumstances in what White terms the "creative management" of families subject to the realities of life

² Source: <http://www.fujitv.co.jp/en/index.html> Retrieved 19.08.2013

(2002:11). Eiko does not participate in the mediated nostalgia implied by Japanese dramas because through her networking and Japan-based freelance work she is constantly in touch with a Japan in the here and now. The dramas are not necessary to mitigate her longing for Japan, nor is the emotional pull of nostalgia an attraction to her, especially as she does not equate her feelings or experiences with the character types. This is not to say that she denied any familiarity with the genre. Eiko did mention that:

[I] sometimes watch on YouTube. I don't really watch Japanese drama but when I do, they seem completely new [pause] that they are different to what I know as dramas years ago, when I was 16. We used to call it *handsome guy ikemen* [this prompted much laughter all around the table]. But now the men look so feminine, it's different.

Ikemen is a good looking man. According to Chika, the word is a contraction of the Japanese word for cool, *ikeru*, and the English word for man and came into popular usage in the late 1990s. As a former resident of Japan, the change in the depiction of men from cool and handsome to pretty was a surprising and unwelcome modification in the male role model for Eiko. Kae agreed with this assessment, noting that "the Japanese drama has changed." Kimiko nodded solemnly, and added these final words to the discussion that could perhaps be considered a summation of all their lives: "We have changed."

Ien Ang mentions the contradictory demands of heterogeneous diasporic identity that Eiko implies in her observation of the mean and sour girl (1989). Ang comments that she wishes that she could speak about an all inclusive 'us' as a kind of collective memory and codified cultural heritage. These women are in a different position to Ang as they came to the UK as free agents, autonomous subjectivities who actively participate in the codified culture of Japan whilst simultaneously are able to take part in British society to varying degrees which my interlocutors determine for themselves. The act of not watching soaps may be construed as a self-defining placement within the category of perceived gender roles. For example, Eiko doesn't identify with the portrayal of women normally provided in soaps and therefore can't feel the pleasure of watching. Wakako isn't interested because she doesn't like new, trendy things and

prefers to look to the past for her pleasure. She finds pleasure in the alternative, and this rejection of new things, whether it is social media or an interest in soaps is in keeping with her character. Her husband is similarly oriented in terms of his interest in cultural content and events. He recalls that one of the things he found most intriguing about her while they were courting was her avid interest in the films of the Italian horror film director Dario Argento. Wakako participates in a less populist approach to her media interests, but she does not exclude herself from Japanese womanhood because of this interest in the alternative, in fact she embraces a nostalgic Japan, and cultivates her own media experiences through her memories of how she remembers a personal version of the Japan she left behind. By choosing not to watch soaps these women are identifying with perhaps a non-mainstream relationship with its popular culture.

There also the generational element to account for, as Eiko said that the soaps are something that her grandmother especially loved and she implicated the simplicity of the moral outcomes involved in the storytelling in that it was always clear from the outset who was a good character and who was bad as being an essential part of the appeal across generations: “Even the Japanese period dramas that my mum always watched and enjoyed, if he [the character] is evil, he will be punished. The good guy was always so good, he was too good! And my grandmother loved it so much.” The Monday night drama was an important feature of her mother and grandmother’s weekly routine and by not aligning herself with the ritual that she associates with her family, Eiko is also separating herself from the gendered viewing habits of previous generations.

Ien Ang also refers to her own subjectivity with regard to the demands of heterogeneous diasporic identifications whilst reading an account of Chippewa Indians and their annual rituals:

As one whose ethnic history is thoroughly mixed up by a multiplicity of geographical, cultural and biographical movements it seems both impossible and unwarranted for me to construct a clear sense of ‘us’. For me, then, individualism is both a necessity and a solution, and thus ultimately distanced

me from the subject position inhabited by Valaskakis (the author of the account) (Ang 1989:29).

My interlocutors similarly felt pushed and pulled by such multiplicities as they go about their daily lives as working mums and housewives in Edinburgh, or Chester or London. They live their daily lives amidst constant reminders that they are not truly able to inhabit British society as native citizens nor can they be real-time participants in contemporary Japanese society.

7.4 Riding the Wave of Social Change and Nostalgia

In November 2009 I attended a talk on Japanese culture presented at Charlton House, a fine Jacobean mansion house in Southeast London. These talks are organised by the Institute of International Education in London (IIEL), an educational institute that offers courses and qualifications in how to teach Japanese to English speakers and English courses for its Japanese students. Mariko had recently completed a course to receive her TJFL certificate and had returned to complete a diploma certificate. She had decided on this course of action as a result of her marriage breakdown and the subsequent need to establish her credentials as a Japanese language teacher in order to have a reliable source of income. The majority of the students on Mariko's diploma course that year had come from Japan specifically to gain a qualification in language teaching here in London. The institute is based at Charlton House and the talks are organised with the aim of improving the English language ability and confidence of the students on the Diploma course. These talks are held twice a year and are open to the local public. I attended this particular evening to hear Mariko's presentation on the six national treasure dogs of Japan³ and was surprised to hear about a new social phenomenon in Japan called *konkatsu* from one of the student presenters that evening.

Kaori (a pseudonym) explained in her talk that this word was a contraction of the words *kekkon katsudo*, (marriage hunting) and she outlined the rise of this particular new approach to finding a partner among urban Japanese in their twenties and

³ These breeds are the Hokkaido, the Kishu, the Akita (the presentation featured photos of Mariko's dog Beni) the Shikoku, the Kai and the Shiba, so called because of their indigenous origins.

thirties.⁴ Kaori linked *konkatsu* to the collapse of the bubble economy, the rise of convenience shops and the spread of the internet as lifestyle changing factors that meant that older and more traditional forms of partner finding in Japan were no longer proving effective. As a result, new and more robust solutions to the problem of finding a partner were needed. Agencies had formed to exploit the new *konkatsu* phenomenon and their exorbitant fees were not impeding their popularity. Several shrines had begun to offer specific days for love prayers in order to focus on the spiritual side of partner hunting. The pressure of finding a suitable partner had in turn placed more pressure on the parents of young singles and activities such as surrogate speed dating for parents of singles had also been established.

I spoke to Kaori briefly about this topic after the presentations were over. She was a young woman dressed neatly in a white blouse and a dark skirt that wouldn't look out of place in an office setting. She said that "there was a very popular drama on Japanese television this year (2009) called *Konkatsu!* so more people are talking about it now. There was even a *konkatsu* bra for counting the days to your wedding. It is mostly women who are worried about this kind of thing. I went with a friend of mine to the temple for love prayers and it was very busy." When I asked her what she thought of all of this she said: "I have been thinking too much about *konkatsu* before today because of the presentation. But I am glad that I am in London for a while now so that I can think about the course and not about *konkatsu*." I thanked her for taking a few minutes to speak with me and although I was unable to ask any further questions, I was left with the gist that Kaori was relieved to be away from the media-driven (and perhaps parental-driven) focus on partner hunting in Japan and could now get on with her language teacher training in Charlton.

*Konkatsu!*⁵ was a comedy-drama that focused on the lead male character Kuni's pretence of being engaged in order to obtain a job that requires a married candidate. The lead and minor characters all undergo various permutations of potential relationships before the lead character finds his true purpose as a *tonkatsu* chef at his

⁴ These activities included speed dating and organised singles nights at sporting events and bars and restaurants.

⁵ *Konkatsu!* was produced by Fuji TV and broadcast in Japan in April 2009. (source: <http://www.tokyograph.com/blog/spring-2009-drama-preview/> Retrieved 15 March 2013). The title plays on the word *tonkatsu*, a Japanese dish of breaded and fried pork cutlet served with rice.

father's restaurant and love with his neighbourhood friend Haruno, who works at his father's restaurant. She was complicit in his charade from the outset, motivated by her true feelings for her employer's son in the first place. Whilst the issue of partner hunting was not relevant to my interlocutors (nor would they have been the target audience for such a series), I include this example as a means of outlining how Japanese drama works to address current social concerns and suggest viable satisfactory conclusions. Programmes such as *Konkatsu!* present their story lines within the framework of dramatised social relationships that are played out within culturally recognised parameters of tradition. What is of interest here is how Japanese programming seeks to reiterate tradition by bringing modern social phenomena to the national audience. In this case, despite the main character's search for work and love within the context of a modern (and less than economically successful) Japan, Kuni ultimately finds personal fulfilment right where he started from, in his father's restaurant. In addition, nostalgia for an imagined Japan is greatly implicated as part of the solution in *Konkatsu!*, with its evocative portrayals of an old-fashioned neighbourhood amidst an urban sprawl. The sentimental portrayals of a past that is shared and understood by the audience, is a key element in the majority of successful Japanese dramas (Iwabuchi 2004).

A popular drama at the time of this particular interview in September 2010 among the Edinburgh women who watched such programming, was *Jin*. This is a drama that started life as a popular *manga* series that was developed as an award winning ratings winner for the Tokyo Broadcasting System (TBS) in the Autumn season of 2009. It follows the adventures of a modern Tokyo brain surgeon named Minakata Jin who finds himself transported back to the *Edo* period (1600-1868), to pre-modern Tokyo which was also called *Edo* during this time, and then spends the ensuing eleven episodes trying to find a way back through time whilst using his modern medical knowledge and techniques to save the *Edo* inhabitants in the hope that he does not alter history forever. As Isolde Standish points out, these samurai heroes, or even period set dramas overall, have been "constructed for domestic consumption within the female-centred space of the home" (2010:436). The women in *Jin* may be seen as behaving in an outspoken and in a contrary manner, much as one would expect from a self-assured woman in the twenty-first century, but these bright and resourceful characters ultimately fulfil the Confucian ideal of being obedient to their elders and

men through their own skills of negotiation and understanding with and of the male characters.

Part of the appeal of *Jin* was its popularity in Japan and Kimiko had heard about the drama from friends and family before finding an upload of the entire series on *DramaCrazy.net*. Kazuko found it interesting particularly because she enjoys hospital and medical dramas and detective dramas overall, but she also “liked the drama *Jin* because I thought it was an interesting story, how a modern doctor could respond to being in the past but still always thinking about his real life in the future.” There was also the visual appeal of watching a portrayal of old Tokyo in its *Edo* incarnation in the 1860s. Kimiko enjoyed this element of the series, “I liked seeing old Japan and how some of the historical characters are involved”, but this was secondary to the narrative as she said “I thought the story was exciting because you were never sure if he [Jin] would return to his life in the modern day.” In fact Kimiko enjoyed the story so much that it kept her engaged for ten hours on a single day.

The significance of the dramas is in the link, the contact with current or contemporary Japan that viewing the soaps seems to provide. This significance goes beyond the consumption of the visual Japan that the dramas provide, also allowing the women to keep up with social trends and current media topics from home. It renders their interests as something current, and this may be what they find so comforting or relaxing about viewing dramas. They can keep up with local popular culture from the distance of their adopted homeland and participate with reasonably local viewing trends. Viewing dramas also serves remind these women that there are still predictable social roles and expectations that they understand and appreciate and can therefore feel a part of. There is also the role of nostalgia to factor into the process of watching dramas. Moeran (2004) points out that Japanese modern media have taken over the management of Japan’s cultural heritage, and that through specific visual stylistic devices feelings for Japanese tradition and Japanese history as a whole are tenderly manipulated in a way that links the past to the modern and in effect gives modern life a platform of stability. Like Gillespie’s South Asian subjects the Japanese viewers acknowledge the nostalgic element (1995). This takes on a visual component through engagement with historical dramas. Despite being several generations away from the Meiji era lifestyle portrayed in *Jin*, there is the constant theme of *Edo* era life

as an idealised setting of a pure and natural Japanese lifestyle. In *Jin* in particular the threat of disruption, illness, death and even revolution as encountered by the characters are never far away but despite the hardship of life the good citizens of *Edo* are, for the most part, decent, cheerful and honourable people.

In 1990 the battle for prime time ratings in Japan took an interesting turn towards modernity. There was a developing awareness that the prescribed and traditional gender roles of the past were merely cultural constructs (as in the discourse of *ryōsai kenbo*, the good wife and wise mother) that were developed during the processes of modernisation and transformation. The march towards progress resulted in Japan moving from a pre-modern nation to a major force on the global stage in a relatively short span of time (Mamoru 2004). The ensuing change in the public perception of gender opened up new dramatic potential for the writers and producers of television dramas and an updated or more concurrent or more realistic portrayal of womanhood became a core feature of the dramas released during the decade. These characters were portrayed as living the life of an independent woman (as in not reliant on men) while navigating the issues of modern life such as “romantic love, friendship and lifestyle” (ibid). These characteristics are evident in the female characters in *Jin*, who despite their traditional setting, still manage to perform as forceful entities without ever defying the authority of the male characters. In fact, the male characters are often supportive and align themselves with the strengths and desires of the female characters.

Ito argues that since the 1990s, the so-called post-trendy dramas represent a new attractive femininity but do not actually transcend older, familiar narratives; a portrayal of gender that is not submissive to men but rather an individual, that is independent, working, and searching for love yet is not quite disobedient to men (2004). Ito reiterates Kazuko’s observation noted previously that Japanese dramas consist of fixed themes that are recognisable and familiar. These tropes serve to represent the concerns and interests of contemporary Japanese society through recognisable patterns of moderate solutions to modern day concerns such as love affairs, domestic situations and personal anguish that are recognisable to the native viewer and are thus able to relate these patterns in a pleasurable and entertaining manner to their own lives. It would seem that as the internet provides the access to

dramas that have become so relevant to some of my informants they have been able to reconfigure their own practices of relaxation and comfort to coincide with the convenience of on-demand viewing.

7.5 Sakamoto Ryoma - The Meiji David Bowie

Mariko was not normally ‘the type’ to watch dramas but in April 2010 she could not resist logging onto *Veoh*, a video streaming service based in San Diego, when her friend, Y, told her both about the site and the most recent NHK historical drama *Ryoma Den*, a 48 episode broadcast of the life of Sakamoto Ryoma, the pre-Meiji era revolutionary who envisaged a modern Japan that could benefit from the best of Westernisation while still maintaining a Japanese heritage and lifestyle. Sakamoto was born in 1836, and was a key figure in Japan’s modernisation. He was known for his exceptional talent as a swordsman and was also recognised as an astute businessman, qualities that have helped to ascertain his iconic status in Japanese history. Sakamoto was a pro-Emperor, anti-shogunate activist who had a vision of ending feudal reign and modernizing a country that had until then isolated itself from the rest of the world. He is lauded for negotiating the union of the two most powerful local governments in Japan at the time, the *Satsuma* and the *Choshu*. This political union eventually became the driving force that ended more than 260 years of Tokugawa reign.⁶

Mariko said she had long been an admirer of Ryoma (he is so highly regarded in Japan that he is referred to by his first name only) as he was viewed as the bridge between the pre-modern and modern Japan in the late eighteenth century. She identified Sakamoto Ryoma as a kind of David Bowie figure and a personal hero because he was initially a misunderstood rebel who was struggling to place Japan on a modern footing that would see the nation as a viable presence on the global geo-political stage. “He wanted to see a modern Japan but in the end he was assassinated because of his ideas for the country.” She commented on the famous photograph of him wearing Japanese traditional dress whilst wearing a pair of Western style boots as evidence of his ability to imagine a modern nation that would still be true to its traditional ways of being. It was her interest and admiration in the man and his

⁶ Source: <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2010/04/27/reference/sakamoto-the-man-and-the-myth/#.UhkSgD8frsY> Accessed 15 August 2013.

accomplishments that impelled Mariko's interest in, and commitment to, this particular NHK series:

I didn't think I would ever want to watch a drama series the way Y does – she really gets into it and she watches them as much as she can! She watches a lot. But then she told me about this website called *Veoh*, it's based in America I think. She said they were showing the series called *Ryoma Den*, and it was only a week behind Japan, so it's not like you are watching an old programme or something.

Mariko commented that her desire to watch dramas is a unique turn as it was the first time she had felt compelled to search out Japanese television. She had previously been content to watch British television drama programmes and would mainly just tune into whatever the other members of the family were watching, however since she began watching *Ryoma Den* Mariko stated that it was nice not having to “figure out” some of the more complex English dialogue sequences or colloquial phrases that she was not understanding. The example she gave me was her discomfort at having to regularly ask or guess about the NHS or GP system in Britain if she is watching *Holby City* or *Casualty* with her daughters at home. For Mariko, part of the pleasure of engaging with *Ryoma Den* was that she understood all the background, character and cultural references of this particular series, thus enhancing her experience of watching onscreen dramas and giving her a crucial link with her native culture and heritage at a time when she was feeling particularly stranded as she dealt with the aftermath of her separation.

Mariko also acknowledged the potential threat that all this internet viewing must have on the future prospects of JSTV, the Japanese language satellite television service that serves regions outside of Japan, “I don't know of anyone who has JSTV these days with the internet and YouTube.” We both discussed the possibility that even if hotels were to remain as the only subscribing entities, surely it would be more practical and cheaper for businessmen to watch what they want on YouTube as well, or some other video streaming service such as *Veoh*. Mariko was able to watch the episodes with only a one week time lag which meant that the viewing experience was essentially

concurrent with what native viewers would have been watching, and this was an important factor in her decision to commit to the series.

7.6 Soft Transgression (Soft Contestation?)

Both Kazuko and Kimiko referred to being ‘hooked’ on dramas at the time of our interview. The use of this term for a seemingly harmless activity imbues the act of drama viewing with addiction and anti-social behaviour and the quest for illicit pleasure. This search for a satisfying media experience has on occasion caused their partners to exhibit frustration at the amount of time spent and the solitariness of watching dramas. Although Kae’s husband often joins her for drama viewing on *Dramacrazy.net*, Kazuko will turn to the Chinese video sharing site *Tudou* in order to watch full length, uninterrupted episodes of her preferred dramas. She is also a strong advocate of *Dramacrazy.net* and suggested that I refer to the site because the uploaders provide English subtitles (unlike *Tudou*) but as the episodes are loaded in 15 minute segments she prefers the uninterrupted streaming of full-length episodes on *Tudou* her own personal pleasure. However, both she and Kazuko have found that this new interest has resulted in less-than- favourable comments at home: “The funny thing is that they (the husbands) get jealous or something! They come in and they see you and they say (imitates huffy male voice): “Oh, you are watching in Japanese.” Later in the conversation Kazuko related how her husband tried to distract her from her drama viewing by coming up with chores around the house that he thought she should be attending to, “He got jealous of me watching Japanese! This is my private time. I wanted to be absorbed.”

These comments were related with good humour and did not indicate for a moment that Kimiko and Kazuko were in any way willing to sacrifice their own personal pleasure in order to placate their “jealous” British husbands. But there was more than just pleasure at stake for both Kimiko and Kazuko. For both these women, watching dramas privately at home was another way of reconnecting with their feelings of ethnicity and homeland. There is also the escapist element as watching dramas acts as a buffer between the mundane and the pleasurable. The women who did watch dramas stressed the importance of the narrative, that is, of the particular quality of the Japanese narrative that celebrates the good and punishes the evil but always in a way that tests the depth of the main character’s attributes. There is comfort (again, an

ambiguous term that is used frequently in these discussions) in the familiarity and predictability of the storylines. The quality of the production and the narrative reflect the continuing importance of the domestic ratings war in Japan and this too must account for the attraction of the viewing experience. Kimiko provided some insight as to why this pleasure or comfort is not just ambiguous but can be marked as comfortable: “You feel like you want to be somewhere you can’t be, you can’t completely cut it off, you feel like you want to have a connection with something. Then it’s easier to keep the culture.”

I am identifying these actions as soft transgressions, although they may just as easily be considered as soft contestations of the prevailing social order at home. It was clear that the other occupants who shared the domestic space with Kimiko and Kazuko would have preferred to see the home’s primary ‘domestic engineer’ participate in activities other than the excessive watching of soaps. The drive to engage with dramas, what Kimiko and Kazuko both called being ‘hooked’, can be seen to be another facet of following one’s *ikigai*. Another perspective is that this motivation to stay in touch with Japanese texts in this way could have come about because these women are sensitive to the possibility that they are now viewed as somehow less Japanese by others back home. I have noted previously that because of my interlocutor’s contact with the West and their ease with English may somehow mark them out as “un-Japanese Japanese...thereby causing an inconsistency in and inefficacy of the symbolic boundary that defines Japanese identity.” (Yoshino 1992: 129, cf. Valentine 1990). For these women, one site where this particular form of boundary dissonance is negotiated is at home, within the private domestic space.

By bringing dramas that are produced and broadcast in Japan through somewhat quasi-legal means there are new boundaries that must be re-established or renegotiated in order to accommodate this pastime that is chosen specifically because of its ability to address the longing for Japan that these women expressed. The decision to watch dramas is closely linked to decisions of how to manage their time in the home. It is an issue of time management that is self-determining and must be accommodated within the rhythms and routines of the day. There is a deliberate separation between the women and the rest of the household as they must retract from the more social spaces of the home and focus on the computer screen as the provider

of meaning for the duration of their viewing time. Kae was the only interlocutor who spoke of watching with her husband, but it is possible that the demands of having a toddler in the house contributes to the attraction of a shared, quiet time to watch dramas. Clearly this is an individualist pursuit and time must be made in the daily or weekly routine in order to accommodate it.

7.7 Implications of a Modern Media Practice

The domestic Japanese mass media continues to have a role to play in the arena of identity construction as well, with one example being the television broadcast of *doramas* which try to negotiate the progressive ideal of the modern Japanese woman: working outside of the home but simultaneously maintaining traditional values such as self-sacrifice and duty to the family. Again, however, not all is as it seems as these dramatic conventions serve as a kind of wrapping which provides a platform for the more progressive and less conventional attitudes to gain social currency. These programmes have been linked to projects of nation building; through the portrayal of ambitious and hard working, yet still maternal and sincere, women they are laden with the ethic of positive national growth (Harvey 1998). Martin (2007) suggests that Japanese women in Britain have an opportunity to view Japan from the outside, allowing them to reassess aspects of their own culture and this in turn results in a heightened sense of their own Japanese identity and encourages an appreciation of both the positive and the negative aspects of both countries, how to adapt their behaviour accordingly and to navigate skilfully between the two. This seems to be evidence that the instability and mutability of identities can be discursively situated within the global-local nexus and it is crucial to this argument that the practice of viewing Japanese dramas by my informants is viewed as a defining and gendered activity that expresses these global-local articulations.

The original purpose of the drama broadcast is reimagined by the non-local native viewer to fulfil a need for contact with specific elements in their native culture. For Mariko, the possibility of watching a quality series on a personal historical hero was sufficient motivation to secure the time and space in her day to accomplish this. These texts become almost super meaningful in that they transcend their original purpose of increased viewer figures and advertising revenue for the broadcasting station and instead are appropriated by individual viewers to fulfil very personal desires that

transcend the need for simple pleasure or recreation. The terms that the women used to describe the experience such as “hooked” and “absorbed” indicate an evocative experience that requires a degree of personal and temporal investment in order to achieve the cultural fulfilment and satisfaction they are seeking. It also suggests the placement of these texts within a perceived hierarchy of media, one that incorporates a degree of latent guilt. For my informants, watching dramas online satisfied multiple cultural and ethnic needs including watching and thoroughly comprehending the language and contextual setting, understanding the spoken and unspoken narrative tools and the narrative purposes of the characters.

7.8 Conclusion

Bauman refers to the growing demand for more pronounced, though symbolic, rather than institutionalised, ethnic distinctiveness (1990:167) and my informants have been proactive in their quest to assert their ethnicity through symbolic means via their online media choices. Viewing dramas online may ostensibly be seen as a pleasurable activity but it is ultimately a pleasure that must be worked at. Titles must be searched for, the most suitable streaming site decided on, and time must be put aside from the usual routines in order to indulge in viewing. It is a pleasure that comes at some personal cost as partners may choose to participate or not, thereby either diluting the intensely personal nature of the pleasure or detracting from it. These dramas must be watched in a non-original format, from a computer screen that will probably be littered with English, Korean or Chinese subtitles that detract from the visual pleasure of the native viewer but will enhance the experience of the growing (judging from the number of sites that offer such a service) transnational audience.

As indicated initially in the introduction, what can be deduced from my informants and their drama viewing proclivities is that identity is to be found in the embodied habits of social life this discourse must also include an acknowledgement of the strong sentiments that unite a community into a bounded and organised grouping (Barth 1969, Williams 1976). The relationship between self and media is distinctive yet somehow tinted by the shadow of a nationalist discourse that surrounds the wider political and economic subjectivities represented by the Japanese media experience. This separation is important because I would like to acknowledge the link between consumerism and a sense of place which in turns establishes the family and its

constituent members within a broader social network (Robins 1989, Moores 1993) and to consider the ways in which the “strategies of geo- politics” (for example, the subversion of Japanese internet copyright laws by my informants) are translated and performed as the “little tactics of the habitat” as my informants maintain their drama viewing pleasures by searching out content sharing sites such as *Tudou*, *Veoh* or *DramaCrazy.net* (Foucault 1980).

Gellner (1983) observed that nationalism has become a sociological necessity in the modern world and the establishment of a strong state is generally preceded not just by a common vernacular, but also by the formation of a strong sense of national identity within its boundaries – something that has remained an elusive and deeply contested feature of modern political life (cf. Smith 1986, Billig 1995, Nairn 1997) as populations continue to disperse and national boundaries no longer restrict such movement. The relocation of subjectivities must allow the present national to acknowledge a sense of development and advancement and provides a sense of shared history and common destiny, each component essential in the construction of a cohesive national identity that has hinged on ever-increasing modes of communication and their associated technologies (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983, Anderson 2006, Habermas 1989). And what better place to engage and play out these dynamics than the production of televisual content that not only reinforces the state of being Japanese but also succeeds in bringing in ratings and revenues to these protectors of cultural identity – the national broadcasting stations of Japan.

As transnational viewers my informants are no longer part of, or subject to, the television network’s ratings war or advertisement strategies and as such are in a much better position to indulge in the cultivation of their transnational imagination as they see fit (Iwabuchi 2004). They are outside the range of influence of this particular sphere of commercial broadcast; however, they are still vulnerable to word of mouth promotion and other sources of media hype such as Japanese television websites. When viewed online via the content sharing sites the dramas will usually include the logos of the various programme sponsors displayed in the opening credits as they have been recorded from real time Japanese broadcast, but the online viewing experience will not include any further commercial activity. For my informants, watching soaps is linked to concepts of time, leisure, the nostalgic use of familiar and

dependable television tropes, and of course memories of Japan. The interviews indicated that the most important appeal of watching dramas online is the indulgence of the familiar in which watching in the native language is the most satisfying element. This is the significance of these dramas travelling from their local context on Japanese television in order to be utilised as local products once again when viewed in the privacy of the home in the UK. These transnational media flows are accessed in order to engage with their own transnational imagination and are a relevant means of visually and emotionally juxtaposing and comparing a self reflexive view towards the culture and society in which they now reside.

Chapter Eight: The Tohoku Earthquake: The Ties that Bind and Unbind

8.1 Introduction

The BBC reported the event as “Japan’s most powerful earthquake since records began.”¹ The undersea earthquake struck Japan’s northeast coast on March 11 at 14:46 JST (5:46 GMT) and unleashed a tsunami that wreaked destruction up to 5 kilometres inland (Kingston 2012). It would seem that everything else that has transpired since that time is now and will always be open to discussion and debate, whether concerning the exact number of lives lost or the adequacy of the government’s intervention or the monetary value of the economic loss to the local population and the nation. This chapter will examine how my interlocutors responded to the unfolding situation in Japan in the immediate aftermath of the devastation. What I am including here is not just their visceral response to the mediated images flowing into their home via the television and internet. Their reactions also included how they explicitly and publically performed representations of their Japanese selves in order to initiate and participate in various awareness-raising and fundraising activities within their communities.² These representations must be recognised as flexible and negotiable permutations of an identity played out locally in response to a disaster that occurred far from British shores. My interlocutors responded in a variety of ways to the earthquake, both as individuals and as members of a specific social group. This is the arena that saw the greatest variety of expression of the social self both in a Japanese and British context that is touched upon in chapter one.

The news began to filter through to Britain shortly after the earthquake took place, with several of the women such as Wakako, Yumi and Yumiko first hearing the news from their partners. The news in and of itself was shocking enough, but when reports of the magnitude were heard the women were all dumbfounded. As Japanese natives they were more than familiar with earthquake terminology in English and the Richter readings that were being announced in the first news reports of 8.6 and 8.7 were cause for significant concern. However, later that morning these numbers were eventually

¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-12709598> Retrieved 20/06/14.

² In this chapter I will specifically reference the media related practices of my discussants following the Tohoku Earthquake. I will address the issues surrounding the Fukushima nuclear crisis in the following chapter.

corrected to the even higher magnitude of 8.9 with the true strength of the quake finalised at 9.0 on Sunday 13 March.³ These numbers indicated to the experienced previous residents of Japan that this was an earthquake of monster proportions. Yumi's recollection of her first response was indicative of the shock: "It was extremely worrying because it was a huge one. But it was really horrible when I started to hear how bad it really was."

8.2 The I-Witness Account

Asan happened to be in Tokyo when the earthquake struck. As I have already discussed, she is a successful recording artist who happens to reside in London and she is obliged to visit Japan several times a year in order to fulfil contractual requirements. Hers is a detailed account of how familiar routine life stopped temporarily for one of the largest cities in the world and how family ties and community relations served to transcend the paralysed transport system to ensure that Asan was able to return to her hotel in Shinjuku. Asan had been attending a family luncheon for twelve at a French restaurant on the third floor of what she described as "a seventies building", a characteristic that was important because it reflected the viability of its earthquake resistance. This lunch had been organised by her relatives as both her parents are deceased, so it was a way for Asan to maintain her relationships with the extended members of her upper middle class family.⁴ The shaking began and the family group sat in silence for its duration. The maître d' had disappeared into the kitchen but then emerged a few moments later with an initial report. Here is Asan's account of the afternoon, which reflects her and her family's socioeconomic positioning, community alliances and the representation of the domestic space as the ultimate refuge against the backdrop of the confusion in Tokyo on the 11th of March:

He [the maître d'] came back out and told us it was magnitude 8.9, at that point it was only 8.9, and that it was in the sea, in the Pacific, so that is the first information I got, so normally it is from the television or the radio, but there was still shaking, and funny enough the restaurant was empty apart from

³ *The Daily Telegraph* "Japan fights for its life", 14 March 2011.

⁴ Asan might not agree with this classification as she had previously identified herself as "middle class" despite her attendance at a private university and her father's high ranking position as a company executive.

us, everyone else had gone, but because it was a big family gathering, you know, 12 of us, and it was a long, long lunch and coffee and desserts. I tried to contact him [her husband D in London] from my mobile, my UK mobile, and I couldn't understand why were we still shaking? Maybe because it was an after shock, so between the first one and the second one, it was waving for 5 minutes, so I ... because I thought I was going to die, and I just said that I wanted to leave a message, and I love you, and that was the only thing I sent. It was 2:35 I think [the starting time has been confirmed as 2:46].

I was lucky to make that happen. But then I had to contact the people I was going to see after that lunch, and I couldn't get through. I tried, well everyone was trying at that time, hundreds and hundreds of people trying to call out. I tried to get back to my hotel but all the lines were shut. My hotel was in Shinjuku and I was on the Chuo line, 15 minutes outside the centre of Tokyo. And the restaurant was right in front of the station. I was waiting in the restaurant with my uncle, who was in the wheelchair. We were waiting for the lift for the wheelchair, but of course it never happened. So we ended up, well the restaurant people, ended up carrying the wheelchair downstairs because the aftershocks kept happening, so they decided it was probably a good time to evacuate the building. So we did. And we found a sea of people in front of the building.

My auntie and uncle went back to their home because it was their local restaurant. And then some of the other relatives went back, because they were local, and then two other ladies had come from far away, so they thought they would leave with me, so the three of us went to the station, and realised oh no, no train. We didn't know what to do. So then we decided to go to the next station, and there we could get the connection with the tube, the tube lines. So we queued for a bus and we jumped on the bus and got to Ichigaya [a metro stop in central Tokyo]. And then we realised that there were more people stranded, and then we got scared, because it's a bigger station! And then we realised, well after speaking to the people working at the station, and they kept telling us the same thing, we don't know when they are going to restart the service. Basically, they really didn't know.

So we thought that we would share a taxi but then we saw the taxi queues. It was frustrating because we had already had to wait there and the ladies I was with were elderly, so I said to them, let's go down to where we came, and go to auntie's house, because at least there we can sit down, and watch television, and wait for the news. That was the best thing we could do. So we agreed and we went back and we sat in my auntie's house, watching the television and realised that it was all over Japan, it was coming through, and then we realised the scale of it. At that point one of the ladies I was with was actually the sister of my auntie, so Auntie said, you are not going home, you are staying with me. One lady decided to stay, but the other lady, who was the sister of auntie, and myself, because I was supposed to fly back so I was desperate to get back, so we both wanted to go home. And this lady, her house is near Shinjuku so it was kind of convenient that we go together.

My auntie and uncle had a car at their home, because they live with their son, my cousin, who drives. But he wasn't around, he was at work, luckily he could walk home because he works locally, but they realised that my cousin would be late home because it was Friday, like four o'clock or something and there would be lots of people trying to get home. My auntie said, another relative lives nearby, he is a retired taxi driver and he is a really good driver, and he knows all the back streets and I think its better to ask him to drive you back, than asking my son, so eventually he drove us back but then he said he had to wait for my cousin to get back, because he had to find where are the car keys for a start, and also permission to use his (Asan's cousin's) car, insurance and all that. Eventually, he kindly gave us a lift and I got back to the hotel about half seven, but I was lucky. I got to the airport the next day and I sat in front of the television, because there had been trouble with the electricity, so they switched off the lights at the airport at 11:00 and the emergency lights came on, the ones on the ground, they are orangey, you know and so it was nice and cozy, in front of the big screen, like a cinema, just watching the news like that. But when I got home, I began to feel that I had deserted the people back in Japan. The survival instinct kicks in. Once you get home, you start

feeling, what am I going to do next? Then realise, oh wait a minute, I'm not in Japan.

Asan's recollection is notable for the way she outlines how she had to navigate the disorder of the Tokyo transport system whilst maintaining a clear responsibility for two elderly women who had been called on to participate in a family gathering, a particular role activity for older women (Lebra 1984). For Asan, the challenge was to negotiate her bonds of place and kinship with both Japan and Britain in order to arrive at a satisfactory outcome for herself, husband and family at a time of crisis. She accomplished this with the help of family ties and communications technology that intermeshed subjectivity with desired outcome.

The despair that she expressed as the realisation that she might not get back to London alive is especially poignant. Her only wish was to leave one final message to a husband that she might not see again. She was quick to phrase her responses in the situation she found herself in as 'instinct', which is how she phrased her fundraising exercise as will be seen in the next section. Expressions of this sort would be in line with what Lebra describes as an "interactional self" in that the self is socially contextualised and displays an interdependency with others that relies on a "high degree of awareness" in order to perform meaningfully (1992:106). In this example, Asan's phone quite literally becomes an extension of herself as a loving wife, allowing her to declare her most heartfelt sentiments to a spouse whom she believes she may never see again. The mobile phone, a device that transcends temporal and geographical limitations, allows her to say these precious words within the context of an unknowable future. This is an unforeseen arena of media use whereby the familiar skills and uses of a mundane, everyday product must be renegotiated and rethought on the hoof, within an instant of the event occurring. So not only is the self able to perform in a multiplicity of roles as the external world is changing moment by moment, so do the media practices that have been internalised over a lifetime of daily use become fluid and negotiable under new and unforeseen conditions.

I have referred to her use of two separate mobile phones when in Japan, one for calling out to the UK and a second for use in Japan. This is not an uncommon practice for those who travel between national borders with any frequency and serves

to circumvent the excessive roaming charges that such phone use can incur. What is interesting is to frame this usage as a hybrid use of telephone knowledge in such a way that it can be seen as a kind of cost effective resistance to the over the top profit making regulations that are meant to control such international use. Marshall McLuhan had predicted the occurrence of something similar fifty years ago when he referred to the “hybridizations of...media (that) release great new force and energy as by fission or fusion” (2001:53). Granted that Asan’s subversive integration of two telephone systems may not be recognisable as a “great new force” but I would argue that as an extension of self, Asan’s creative interpretation of the technology available to her works to cancel time, space and excessive phone charges in a manner that bristles with the particular energy of knowledge and understanding.

8.3 Witnesses to Devastation

By the time of this particular interview in September 2011, Wakako expressed a more pragmatic perspective regarding the footage that had been streamed across the globe via the internet. “I turned the computer on, and the lines started – the biggest earthquake ever, the worst usual images were broadcast.” Wakako sighed and shook her head. As we sat in the hotel bar in Edinburgh, Kimiko was uncharacteristically quiet about contributing to the discussion of post-earthquake activities, and I mistook this reticence as an indication of a deep and sensitive response to the event. When she did eventually comment, I was surprised by her observation that “I found that I was more worried than my relatives in Osaka – they were too far away from the event to feel as involved as I felt. The media had a negative effect on me, more than on my relatives in Osaka.” Despite the distance between Tohoku and Edinburgh, Kimiko found that she was more involved with the events in her homeland than those who lived within Japan’s borders. I was surprised that Kimiko had framed her response to the coverage as a negative experience but she helpfully clarified this by explaining that she felt emotionally manipulated by the non-stop coverage in that she found it too compelling to stop herself and was drawn to the extreme footage as a way of participating in the event itself. She added an analogy with the Chilean mining disaster in 2010 in that she felt that she had watched and participated in something huge, a global happening only without, she added poignantly, “such a happy ending”.

As can be expected from someone who is from the locality, Eiko's concern was more immediate and seemingly visceral:

My mother lives in the area that was directly affected; the main image on the BBC was about 3 kilometres from my house. It took 7 hours to get in touch with my mother after the earthquake. Both my sister and my brother were staying on my mother's property, in a little cottage so I was really worried. But I had to make sure that family was ok.

After her immediate concern about her family had been settled, Eiko then proceeded to begin the slow process of contacting her friends in the area. "Local people couldn't escape. There was no petrol, no food." Eiko later mentioned that she had heard that a few of her acquaintances from school had yet to be found by the time of our interview in September. She quickly clarified that these were not friends, but people she had known from school, an explanation that distanced her from any real personal contact with the devastation. Yumiko in Chester and her husband became very concerned over a British friend in Sendai, Julian Crocker, who had gone missing and had not been heard from. Two weeks after the earthquake they were understandably relieved when a Sky News piece revealed he, his Japanese wife and two young children were safe. This is an example that illustrates how televised media can itself become a means of communication, thus turning the tables on traditional one-to-one methods of communication.

Following the coverage of the disaster on the television, new sources of negotiation over the representation of what, exactly, constituted the truth emerged. Asan remarked on a particular segment that she found objectionable:

I was usually watching BBC News 24, but sometimes I watched ITV news, or was it Channel 4, I can't remember which, but there was a news reporter standing on top of some rubble, and he looked like he had conquered it. This attitude, I found it a little bit disrespectful. And he talked about the smell of the decomposed bodies as well, and I don't think it was the smell of the bodies, I think it was the sea, because they said that loads and loads of jellyfishes washed up with the sea. Basically the sea is full of dirty things, and

that is really, really smelly, so I think that is what smells. But that kind of comment was just trying to shock people.

Asan was perceptive enough to bring her own critical awareness to this particular news story, one that she was quick to separate from, in her opinion, the more reputable approach by the BBC. Referring back to the non-BBC report she continued, “I don’t think you would get that kind of discussion on BBC. How did that other news reporter know it was bodies? Did he see them? Was he standing on them?” She referred to the neutrality of the BBC and implied that this quality was in part responsible for the accuracy of their reporting.

Asan’s observation is a reflection on what is now acknowledged as new emerging standard of ethical practice in disaster reportage. Kellner notes that since 9/11 a new form of broadcasting has emerged that capitalises on the emotional and visual effect of these “terror spectacles”, a form that instantly relays the anxiety and instability felt at the site of impact to a waiting worldwide audience (2006: 3). The range of cultural politics that are implied and the potential that such traumatic events have in creating new subjectivities has produced a range of studies that acknowledge this new way of reporting and experiencing global disasters, one that also incorporates new forms of media (cf. Kaplan 2005, Massé 2011). My intention here is to examine the positioning of my individual interlocutors vis à vis this particular event and how their responses can be seen as personal expressions of context and agency.

Kazuko also expressed critical opinions about the news coverage in that she did not feel that the Western media covered the crisis enough. “I was quite stunned – the media coverage only lasted one week... and the British media moved onto the Libya bombings, as if one week was sufficient to cover such a massive amount of devastation.” Nor was Kazuko satisfied with the Ustream services provided by the NHK.⁵ “I don’t know if you know, but the NHK allowed us access to videos on Ustream, but that was only available for a short time.” But later on in the discussion, Kazuko contradicted herself slightly:

⁵ Ustream is a video streaming outlet that provides a video sharing platform for broadcasters and organisations. Source: <http://www.ustream.tv/new> Accessed 01.06.13

Immediately after the earthquake, the media's coverage was quite immediate and non-stop, there was no distance. My immediate reaction was to ring my mum and my two sisters. I felt that perhaps I was interfering but my sister said 'don't worry'. I was so concerned about what I was hearing that I arranged to have some bags of rice sent to my family.

Kazuko began to laugh gently as she continued, "but my sister said that it wasn't necessary, things weren't that bad (in Tokyo) and they could still get rice." Kazuko recognised that she had felt compelled by the extreme images to perhaps overreact to the situation especially as her family were safe in Tokyo, but she had been made aware from various online reports that the salt damage would prevent rice from being grown in several areas for many years to come.

The synchronous broadcasting and access to footage during the first week after the earthquake seemed to achieve much more than just symbolically ushering in the viewers into the moment by moment unfolding of events across the globe. There is a sense that keeping up-to-date and current with the events as close to real time as was practical quickly became an established ritual of consumption for the women, as was the critical appraisal of what was viewed. The constant imagery from the Tohoku region resulted in a particular representation of the area, that this somewhat down at heels part of agricultural Japan could be compared to the more usual press depictions of third world need and powerlessness. I would argue that my interviewees were not just spectators to the disaster but were motivated to act because of the bonds of social solidarity that they shared with the victims *and* that these bonds were reinforced by social media. According to Slater et al., Twitter usage on the day of the earthquake increased "to 1.8 times the average, reaching 330 million tweets in total" (2012:97). People were reporting real-time events and experiences on the ground and disseminating this information on social media platforms which resulted in broadcast television stations in Japan relying on this footage to visually supplement their own reports (ibid). The BBC also relied on this kind of amateur footage prior to the arrival of designated journalists in order to drive the narrative of the disaster here in the UK (ibid). These broadcasting procedures ensured that locally produced images found worldwide reception.

8.4 Responding Locally to a Global Disaster

It was the simultaneous barrage of the enormity of the extreme natural disaster and the ensuing images of destruction and loss that was the catalyst for particular forms of community involvement. That these women are keenly aware of their community in the first place is what made their responses within the community so immediate at the outset. These women, although explicitly members of one coherent social group, exemplify how being Japanese is expressed through differing forms of community participation. Despite sharing similar values, my interlocutors reveal sufficient difference in the expression of these values and interests and these responses are discussed in this and the following section. The variety of responses formed part of the intercommunity communication and negotiation that formed a high profile drive for emotional and monetary support for Japan and its people. The earthquake crisis triggered an engagement with new forms of embodied representation brought about by the presence of these deterritorialised women as they organised and participated in various events to benefit Japan. As much as they may identify with Britain as a place of residence, family and friendship networks, they were able to engage with a performative Japanese self at the time of crisis and use this self to engage with the community.

Far from being treated as strangers in a strange land in so far as Zygmunt Baumann notes that strangers do not fit “our” cognitive, moral or aesthetic world map (1997), the Japanese women who engaged with and recruited others to fundraise in their respective towns and cities received nothing less than a constant stream of compassion and support for their cause from the non-Japanese members of their communities. To fundraise and increase public awareness my interlocutors were required to once again become outsiders, to revisit and re-embody the position of stranger, of other as they became representatives in Britain of the tragedy and suffering taking place on the eastern coast of Japan. While activities such as this may seem to undermine the project of a symbolically unified British identity, I would argue that by imposing the harsh realities of the political onto the real human drama of the earthquake victims my discussants who participated in such activities served as identifiable cultural touchstones that represented the nation of Japan for the shocked and desperate-to-help British public. This albeit essentialised positioning imposed on them from the outside allowed the fundraisers to express themselves as Japanese

women within the British context. The places that serve as home communities supported and engaged with their activities. This allowed the women to make a personal and sincere contribution to alleviate the tangible human suffering in Japan that they were witnessing via the various media outlets.

The immediate responses were to find ways to fundraise for Japan. Bagging groceries seemed to be one popular and instantaneous response in Chester and both Tesco and Marks and Spencers had no problems allowing small groups of two or three Japanese housewives at a time to bag groceries for their customers in exchange for a small donation for the Earthquake relief fund. Arranging for donation buckets from the Red Cross was another immediate response that took place across the country. Despite not admittedly being one of the more enthusiastic participants in the fundraising drives, Yumi outlined how the Japanese community in the Manchester area and those based at the Saturday Japanese School in Lymm got the fundraising ball rolling:

One of the mums, a parent from the Japanese school (at Lymm) was from one of the towns or villages that had been badly damaged...well, she was not from there, but she had spent her teenaged years there, or something like that. Anyway she started organising events, and lots of parents got involved, and I helped out. It was the town that was on fire. At first it was just standing outside shops with a Red Cross bucket. A lot of people went to Tesco. A friend of mine who works for Marks and Spencers in Manchester got permission to pack bags (similar to what Yumiko and her friends did for Tesco in Chester) and she organised a corner in the food hall for donations for Red Cross and Tsunami Relief and I helped out with that, did that for one Saturday. People were so generous! I can't remember how much money we raised – it was thousands of pounds in one day! I couldn't believe it. There was one lady in a wheelchair who said she was sorry she only gave money – she wished could do more – and she was in a wheelchair! It was very very touching.

In Chester Yumiko was very keen to focus the discussion on the earthquake and her activities within her local community. She had spent the last two weeks working on

fundraising and was feeling quite emotional about the event which devastated Sendai, where she had lived and worked since the age of eighteen and had met her husband. She had been feeling stressed by the whole process as she had dedicated so much personal time to various activities and her children were missing her at home. Luckily she had friends and a helpful mother-in-law who had helped out with childcare so that she could focus her time and efforts on fundraising.

Yumiko and her small group of mums from the local community had packed bags at Tesco as one woman had worked there and the management was very welcoming. But the fundraising project that Yumiko was most pleased with was the giant *maiko* (apprentice geisha) doll they had constructed for a stand by the town hall for a fundraising event organised by Chester council. Chester has a long tradition of giant figures and they hold a Giant's Parade every June. As a result of the success of the giant *maiko*, the group had been invited to participate in the parade that year. They then had a final bag packing event at Morrison's and in total managed to raise £7000. Yumiko remarked that the group faced a steep learning curve as there are so many rules and regulations covering charities and fund raising here in the UK, but that they had all come away with a greater understanding and appreciation for the people of Chester.

Asan wrote and produced a final fundraising song which served to provide closure on the earthquake issue and this was announced with a dedicated Facebook page in June 2011. She had put all her energies since returning from Japan in March into producing the project, both song and video. Asan provided a link to Amazon on the Facebook page and this was accompanied by additional links for donations via Amazon. Asan had been contacted by Amazon to participate in the project but decided to put her own thing together because that is what she felt compelled to do – she called it instinct. She wanted to produce something off of her own initiative, and was clear that she recognised that others felt varying degrees of involvement with the crisis and how to respond to it:

I recently had a conversation with a few Japanese people here, and everyone feels differently and some say they didn't feel as bad as I did, in the sense that they weren't there so it's a little bit different when you are watching it on a

screen, and also how you receive or comprehend events, and I think that even I am understanding it a little more emotionally, and other people are more professional, or I don't know, physical, and then the response is slightly different.

The activities that the women undertook served not just to increase public awareness of the grievous situation in Tohoku. This engagement could be seen as a way of self-representation for a social group that are unable to otherwise participate democratically within the majority culture that they reside in (Lebra 1984). Also by engaging with the wider public as a culturally bounded group, the women were conversely presenting a less bounded individual self through their consistently high profile activities within the wider community. It was a representation borne of crisis and disaster, an awareness of a social group that is happy to quietly coexist as part of the cultural diversity of Britain. That these activities were undertaken with a degree of self-awareness is evidenced by the nature of what was undertaken.

Just by bagging groceries, many shoppers readily acknowledged the identity of the baggers by responding to the donation buckets placed at the end of the tills and frequently spoke compassionately to the women which they found touching. Lebra notes that when a person's life cycle becomes entwined with another, a new role in life is taken on, but this observation must be considered in light of taking on a new culture with the potential for different life patterns, roles, values and family relationships as in the case of the Japanese women now residing in Britain (ibid). This negotiated expression of self was perhaps embellished by the women themselves to assert cultural authority over any other less authentic representations that may have become a component of fundraising for the people of Tohoku and to provide a genuine articulation for the disaster both locally and in Japan. This explicit discourse of "hybrid agency" has been presciently outlined by Bhahba:

Hybrid agencies find their voice in a dialectic that does not seek cultural supremacy or sovereignty. They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy; the outside of the inside: the part in the whole.

This framework of hybridity is not to suggest that these representations are sterile articulations as would be suggested by the use of the term “hybrid” especially with regard to the natural world in the case of mammalian hybrids such as mules or ligers, but rather they are new and meaningful representations that resonate with absolute meaning for the home population, who may or may not choose to embrace that which is presented to them. Whichever perspective, or element of, the non-Japanese observers choose to incorporate of the representations that the fundraisers brought to the public consciousness, they will not be left untouched.

8.5 Keeping Calm, Carrying On

On 02 November 2011, Professor Takehiko Kariya from Oxford University gave a lecture at the Japan Foundation in London entitled “What are Japanese people learning from the 3.11 disaster?” in which he discussed the long-simmering social issues that the earthquake had forced the nation to confront and to, hopefully in time, address and rectify. Takehiko briefly touched upon the question of the calm and orderly behaviour that the Japanese people had exhibited in the face of extreme adversity. His answer unfortunately did not provide any substantial clarity to this question as he instead chose to reiterate the familiar rhetoric about Japan, that this reaction was perhaps because Japan was a “homogenous country, a highly educated and literate country, one that was technologically advanced”, and these reasons may have been the source of the resilience and fortitude remarked upon by the British press (cf. McCurry 2011, Buncombe 2011). As his talk progressed, he eventually acknowledged the myth of a homogenous Japan but added that this myth was useful for the media to draw upon in order to deal with the extraordinary circumstances of March 2011, implying that perhaps scratching beneath the surface of the Japanese psyche was best left to the Japanese themselves rather than the forces of global media.

During one of her Japanese classes after the earthquake Chika provided her students with some insight into how she felt the news coverage in the West at the time was in fact “over dramatising the situation” in Japan by using excessively drastic imagery when in actual fact the vast majority of Japanese were stoically going about their daily business in as much as the food and petrol shortages and power outages were allowing them to. She felt that this spirit of the Japanese should be given more credit and

coverage, that this particular quality of the nation should have received wider acknowledgment. This attribute was apparent in Mariko, Kazuko and Yumi, whose attitude suggested that it took a certain degree of personal strength and fortitude to carry on despite the relentless coverage of the chaos in Japan.

Each of the interlocutors who chose to remain more aloof from the fundraising activities did so out of a sense of responsibility to their homes and families in Britain, however they did participate in one or two more low-key activities. In addition, it must be noted that these interviewees have families well outside the Tohoku area. Once these women had discovered that family members were safe and having participated in (rather than organised) one or two fundraising events they seemed to feel no great responsibility to respond to the national need for donations. Indeed this attitude was somewhat corroborated when the questions began to arise of why exactly a first world nation such as Japan would need such a high volume of donations, followed by further questions regarding the distribution of Red Cross donations across the region.

Mariko felt that if she could continue with her daily routine as closely as possible with minimal reference to the disaster that this would serve as a more meaningful way of showing her support for all those in the stricken region who were no longer able to do so. "If I can just carry on and not think too much about it, it would be better. Otherwise I can't do anything;" meaning that if she were to stop and dedicate her time to following the crisis, she would become overwhelmed with sadness and literally not do anything else in the day. At the time Mariko was attending a full time course at a local language school in order to teach Japanese as a second language and the demands of her coursework also meant that she did not have the luxury of spending all day following the events online. She embraced the fundraising event organised by the school as her way of doing her bit for the cause. The event was held at Charlton House on 02 April and she and her daughters (who had baked cupcakes for the event the night before) rose early that morning in order to help prepare the sushi and organise the tea and cake stall that was to be their responsibility for the day.

Kazuko discussed her feelings about her ambivalence towards the various fundraising activities and awareness raising that her other Japanese friends were participating in.

She spoke about “not really feeling all that involved” with the fundraising as she was “here [in Edinburgh] not there [in Japan]”, and she explained that her focus was rightly directed towards her family in the UK rather than a far away place where she could not participate in anything more direct. In her usual concise and considered manner, Kazuko plainly said, “I was here, I couldn’t do anything.” It seemed that Kazuko’s response was based on a complex and negotiated response to the media visual overload and stemmed from feelings of frustration and powerlessness. Kazuko eloquently phrased her self-awareness of the situation:

It would have been different if I hadn’t been watching [the event] through the internet coverage. I would have been more worried, or less troubled, because of the scale of the event, [and since] the daily coverage was available online, so I became quite addicted in a way. But at the end of the day I realised, I am not there, what can I do? The best thing I could do was arrange for money to donate. My family is over there, but I can’t go because my responsibility is here. I was feeling kind of torn between, so I spent several weeks like that, until I told myself I have to go back to normal life. The fact is that something dreadful happened, but I have to carry on. But what Eiko organised [a sale of Japanese food items] was very proactive, and I was able to support with my limited capacity.

In Yumi’s case, her initial response to the non-stop media coverage of the event was to help out locally with a Red Cross bucket in order to solicit donations, however this is where her direct engagement ended. She was aware that other Japanese women, friends of hers, were taking a more active role in fundraising activities but Yumi felt that any further involvement on her part were needless – her family was not immediately affected or in danger as they were in Tokyo, and, as she rationalised it, she was over here anyway and the best and most common sense response for her was to just carry on with her daily routines. “I did pick up a couple of Red Cross buckets from the shop for work (Yumi is a teaching assistant at her local secondary school), but I just sort of left them there, I didn’t proactively seek out anything... I was glued to the websites, it was amazing how devastating the destruction was...but...” She expressed her own internal conflict with the perceived national wealth of Japan and the widely reported instances of recent disasters in other countries:

Because Japan is such a rich country I felt [she did not complete this sentence]... and I didn't do anything for Haiti, or Pakistan, so it's kind of a double standard, well not really a double standard...but then my husband said that it doesn't matter, it depends on who you feel a connection with ... so that made me feel better, less guilty!"

These examples illustrate that how these women responded to the need for social action after the earthquake can be considered as a performative action that distinguishes between different forms and modalities of discourse (Morley 2000). There is also an indication in Yumi's conflicted feelings regarding the level of her contribution to the relief effort and how she felt this should have been more balanced with respect to other disaster relief efforts in other parts of the world. In this respect Yumi is naturally prioritising her affiliation with the Japanese nation but with some internalised sympathy towards other nations that she has seen in difficulty. She feels stymied with regard to the potential of her own individual involvement and it is the geographical rather than mediated distance from Yumi's day to day life in Marple that in all probability makes it difficult for her to see how her personal effort could conceivably make a difference to the extreme difficulties faced by the victims of disaster (Thompson 1995). A different perspective is a contribution to the edited volume about the disaster *Strong in the Rain* (2012), in which the journalist David McNeill recounts how he was brought to tears by a set of "four perfectly turned-out waitresses" in Sendai after the disaster who proceeded to serve him coffee with grace and attention despite whatever fears or loss they had experienced. McNeill observes that far from behaving as unfeeling robots, the young women were dutifully carrying on with their daily responsibilities "because not to do so would have been to let down others, and that invites chaos" – an undesirable outcome when one is surrounded by it.

8.6 Initiating New Media Practices

It is not surprising that the Tohoku Earthquake motivated the Japanese women of this study to explore and experiment with new media and to expand their experiences with more familiar media formats. I have discussed Asan's critical appraisal of the quality of the reporting on a non-BBC news channel, and whilst this may not be a novel insight for Asan, it was an observation that served to increase her admiration for the

quality of the BBC's news service. This resistance to the myriad data being broadcast at the time is not just the result of the critical perspective of a particular national subjectivity but the energy of observation borne from an individual who has participated in a flexible identity that has had to negotiate her position within the dual idioms of culture and community. There were also new engagements with media brought on by the desire to participate in fundraising activities and to bring these activities to the attention of the local community. This inclination to embrace and make good practical use of technology has been linked to the close relationship that Japanese women have with media in Japan as a result of the complex socio-economics that have set Japan on its current mediated path since the post war era, whether it be as potential consumer or in a more high profile role as a media personality (Skov and Moeran 1995).

Asan continued with her appraisal of the superiority of the BBC broadcasting of the event:

I was so, in a strange way, impressed by BBC, all the newscasters, even the weather girl, all wore black. I was wondering whether I imagined it, or whether it really happened, but I think they did it to show solidarity. I think so. And I was so impressed by that level of sensitivity that BBC had.

Whether or not the BBC news broadcasters and weather presenters wore black is a moot point. What matters is that Asan has had her feelings towards the inclusive and sensitive behaviour of its news staff and approach to the coverage reinforced with a memory that indicates a level of compassion that exceeds normal expectations. And embedded within this memory is the reinforcement of the bonds of commiseration and affiliation from the home nation's foremost, and for Asan, most important broadcaster.

Social media use came into its own during the crisis as explained by Eiko. At 34 at the time of the interviews she was the youngest and most technologically adept of the Edinburgh group. She called my attention to a documentary she had found out about on Twitter entitled *No Man's Zone* (Fujiwara 2012), which focussed on the destruction of the area in conjunction with the nuclear crisis in Fukushima. It was still

in production at the time of the interview but Eiko was excited by the project that she felt would provide a true and honest depiction of her native region. She spoke enthusiastically of how she was using Twitter and *mixi* conjunctively in order to get a feel for what was really going on in the area, rather than relying on the more traditional means of gathering information from more official sources. “A friend of mine was tweeting, and reporting what was going on, and then she would post more information on *mixi*.” Eiko elaborated further regarding her rejection of the mainstream news sources, “The day after, March 12, the power plant accident happened and I was looking at both Japanese and UK sources, that’s when I started following Twitter a lot but I stopped reading *Asahi* and *Mainichi* (web pages), because I didn’t trust their news sources.”⁶

Even the more conservative and restrained Kazuko had turned to Twitter during the crisis in order to enhance and expand her awareness of the events as they unfolded during the first week after the earthquake. By following the Ustream coverage that the NHK had enabled online, Kazuko found that she was unable to ignore the Twitter feed that was running alongside the Ustream footage despite the provocative results this produced: “Ustream had Twitter running alongside it. Twitter directed me to YouTube footage. And I found that NHK wasn’t covering everything.”

Eiko also focussed her energies towards producing her own local media event rather than just relying on news consumption to cope with the turmoil she felt over the destruction in her home region. She had been trying to reach out to her local community by making and distributing flyers for their windows. The design was based on the striking cover of *The Independent on Sunday* of 12 March 2011, which depicted the red sun of the Japanese flag and the words “Don’t give up Japan, Don’t give up Tohoku” written in Kanji across the sun and in English underneath that. As a trained graphic artist, Eiko modified the design to read “Keep Going Japan” and underneath she had added a few lines about making donations to the Red Cross. She had heard about the fundraising that the organisation was undertaking on behalf of the

⁶ The loss of trust Eiko mentions here was not unique to her among the interlocutors. This, and the issue of the accuracy and credibility of both Japanese and British news sources, will be discussed further in the following chapter on the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

victims of the earthquake from her husband, who was working at Edinburgh University where the Red Cross had established a presence in the aftermath:

I decided to try and organise something...the event was just a fundraiser, cooking Japanese food and asking for a donation. I didn't do it by myself, Kazuko-san helped as well. Luckily the newspaper came and interviewed me, and they put it on the front cover of the local paper – *The Edinburgh Evening News*, I think it was. I sent an email to *The Scotsman* but I didn't hear anything from them. I think *The Edinburgh Evening News* is part of *The Scotsman*.

By taking a step towards advertising her local event, Eiko managed to raise the awareness of the need for support for the victims throughout the city of Edinburgh and she established herself as a point of contact for the relief effort. She concluded:

Yes I felt satisfied [with my efforts]. I actually tried to go to Japan, I was supposed to go 20th March but there was no transport at all. Normal cars were not permitted to use the motorways, so it was impossible to travel. It helped me to feel that I did something useful.

But it wasn't just the women who were experiencing new ways of engaging with media because of the disaster. There was an example of new media engagement by proxy, as Yumiko's husband informed her about the earthquake in the morning of 11 March.

T had recently subscribed to Twitter and been checking his feed when he found out about it. In our interview in July 2011, Yumiko described to me in detail how her husband is “addicted to Blackberry” and is constantly scanning his tablet computer as well for information. This is partly due to the nature of his work as a sports accountant as he must keep himself informed of the constantly changing status of the industry and the athletes he represents. But Yumiko bemoaned the changes that she felt technology use had elicited in her husband, “before Blackberry he wasn't like that, but he can now access different information and he is doing it all the time.” However for Yumiko there was a significant pay-off to his dedication, “he was

checking his mobile phone, in the morning, early morning, when he heard about the earthquake. So it could be a good thing, and a bad thing.” But Yumiko had also managed to benefit from the easy access to information technology that had been instigated by her partner. She became more than adept at using and assessing the functionality of social networking. As a native of Akita and a previous resident of Sendai she had a vested interest in finding out as much as possible about the safety and wellbeing of her family and friends. Yumiko noted and stressed how Twitter had been extremely useful and important in finding those she was concerned about through the disaster and helping families keep in touch. This was an essential feature because the phone networks were down and email wasn’t available (through computers) but Twitter was readily accessible on handsets and proved to be an invaluable source of comfort for her.

8.7 Conclusion

The representation of intersubjectivities that are outlined this chapter were a result of the women’s response to the natural disaster, as they were faced with a situation that saw them compelled to act as Japanese women within the British context. The plurality of their lives came alive and became a focus and a means of dealing with the extreme images of the disaster that they were confronted with on a daily basis. The news of the disaster was received, discussed and dissected at home, from within the familiar and intimate surroundings that constitute the family living space in ways that tinkered with the conceptually defined spatial rubric of *uchi* and *soto*, wherein *uchi* represents the safety and sanctity of the home and *soto* becomes everything outside that space (Bachnik 1983, Kondo 1990). The earthquake transformed the more familiar landscapes of an agricultural or seaside town Japan into something truly strange and frightening, yet the spectacle of decay was embraced from the home and was understood and consumed as a global event. Their experience as cosmopolitan women of the modern age had not prepared them for the scenes that were to unfold in the days after the disaster. During the news coverage and the inundation of images of unimaginable devastation, these spaces came to represent warmth, safety, security and in some cases guilt over having all these things while so many were left with barely the clothes on their backs by the unpredictability of nature. The underlying presumption here is that the home is the family’s personal space of safety, a place

where strangers and the strange are only allowed in at our behest (Torgovnick 1992, cited in Morley 2000).

Morley notes that it was Marx who was the first to remark how the presence of communication technologies would serve to bring about “the annihilation of space and time”, yet it is this very quality that has rendered the most significant yet tragic event of the 21st Century in Japan to be comprehensible and manageable for the Japanese women of this study (2000:172). The flow of information during the crisis was unrelenting and dramatic to say the least, and this chapter has served as an exploration into how these processes worked to form the individually negotiated and simultaneously cohesive responses of the women I interviewed. In the immediate aftermath of the disaster the world seemed to somehow be a different place and, for what now in retrospect is a short space of time, Japan became the focus of the world’s media. The immediate and almost visceral response of these women to gather together and engage each other and their respective communities as a group was done with a corresponding acknowledgement that the amount of time and effort contributed to fundraising and information seeking was decided upon by the individual and were based upon very particular and self-determined levels of sentiment. The varying degrees of feeling or initiative or ambivalence was acknowledged by others in the group and accepted as such. Despite the earthquake providing an opportunity for the Japanese community to express themselves cohesively as a bounded social group, I have provided examples that illustrate that there was room for the individual to act as such, to respond to the disaster as an individual entity that is nonetheless defined by their place within the Japanese community. And these particular expressions of self in the community are accepted by the others as self-determined.

The responses that were initiated by the Japanese participants of this study were an intrinsic result of the onslaught of media images that the women were inundated with. These words and images in both Japanese and British news sources imparted feelings of attachment and involvement to both their communities in the UK and their native land that seemed to leave them feeling unprepared for the overwhelming awareness that they were actual witnesses to the event, not just to the geological catastrophe but even more to the monumental sense of human loss and suffering that the images conveyed. That these reactions were unavoidable is made clear when the emotive

nature of the newspaper headlines and the cover pages depicting oversized images of destruction are taken into account. The earthquake served to diversify the pre-existing relationships that the women previously held within the community and change them in not so subtle ways, from discrete member/housewife to participant/activist in that the women were inspired to actively campaign and work for charitable contributions from their fellow residents. This drive and motivation stemmed from a desire to help their fellow countrymen who fell victim to the unstoppable and ferocious power of nature. The experience of crisis and destruction and the way the earthquake was experienced by my interlocutors necessarily invokes a phenomenological approach, in that their assessment of how to respond to the tragedy called for a new form of intersubjective living and innovative forms of social action (Jackson 1996). The women chose to engage in fundraising and awareness-raising exercises that most definitely quashed any notions of a bounded self and served to deliver a message of unity along with other members of their communities in such a way that any ideas of discrete social groupings were lost in their performance of Japaneseness. Although they were engaging the British public as Japanese women, they were responding as British residents, employing methods that were the result of their lives in Britain, with a kind of social knowledge that made them part of the social fabric of their communities.

Chapter Nine: The Fukushima Crisis and Changing Perspectives

9.1 Introduction

As we sat in our usual Edinburgh wine bar, Eiko explained her understanding and her personal experience of the Fukushima nuclear crisis:

It's interesting because my mum, like a couple of days after the [nuclear power plant] accident, the self-defence army came to the area, and to my mum's house, and they measured the radiation level and it's probably about 10 microsieverts, which is probably, mmm, I don't know how to describe it, it's a bit high but not too high. The local radio [in Iwaki-shi, her home region] was saying that iodine is in the atmosphere, and that there some evidence that the caesium is coming down with the rain as well, so they have some idea how to protect themselves from the radiation.

Eiko had ordered a tall milky latte and she was absentmindedly fingering the looped handle of her glass. As I was trying to understand her discussion I noticed that she glanced quickly around the table to assess if we were all following her train of thought. There was a uniform silence at the table and she continued:

It's actually about 5 years to decay caesium 137 and 134, which is mostly only on the ground in Fukushima, but it's probably another 30 years that they will have some problem with it. I actually spoke to the nuclear scientist in Edinburgh [University]. I went to visit selling cake [for the relief fund] and I found one of the guys who is a nuclear researcher and he was saying that it's not necessarily the same as Chernobyl at all...A hydrogen explosion is not the same as a reactor meltdown, well there was a meltdown that happened as well. I just ask J [her husband]¹ a lot because it is directly related to my mum.

The Richter scale 9 earthquake and subsequent tsunami that struck the Tohoku region on 11 March 2011 not only flooded and destroyed a large swathe of eastern Japan but

¹ Eiko's husband is a research fellow in nuclear physics at The University of Edinburgh and was therefore an essential resource in Eiko's search for understanding of the events of the Fukushima Crisis.

also led to the near destruction of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant owned and operated by the Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO) (Elliot 2013). Nuclear power plants operate on a similar basis to those run on oil or coal in that water is heated into pressurised steam which in turn is used to run generators, the difference being that nuclear power heats water through nuclear fission. The fuel produced is then formed into rods which generate massive amounts of heat which require a continuous source of water to cool the rods and keep them manageable (Birmingham and McNeill 2012). However, the backup generators at Fukushima had been knocked off the power grid by the earthquake and swamped by the tsunami and were unable to provide the power necessary to pump the essential water that serves to cool the rods and prevent meltdown. Without this cooling process the fuel rods would easily melt through their steel and concrete containers and release their radioactive material into the air and sea. According to Elliot, the sea water that was being pumped through the already overheating plant as an emergency measure reacted with the zirconium cladding surrounding the fuel rods and produced critical amounts of hydrogen gas (2013: 7). As the world's press watched the drama unfold, Reactor 1 exploded on 12 March about 5 hours after the tsunami, followed by Reactor 3 two days later, sending clouds of radioactive contamination in the form of iodine, caesium, and plutonium into the atmosphere and surrounding countryside (ibid). There was a final hydrogen based explosion in Reactor 4 on March 15, however, because this reactor was offline at the time of the earthquake there was very little contaminant material released as its fuel rods had been placed in storage (News 2011).²

When I asked Eiko how she came to be so knowledgeable in this particular area she replied that apart from talking things over with her husband, she had turned to Twitter as the ultimate resource to educate herself about the fast-changing situation in her native region. She had been resourceful in the way she sought out the information she felt was necessary to achieve her own peace of mind following the accident at Fukushima, and this process of self-education was achieved through her interactions on social networking sites and one-to-one discussions with researchers at The University of Edinburgh, a connection that was made accessible through her husband J. This kind of culture capital was an essential tool for Eiko as she was then able to

² World Nuclear News is a public information database published by the World Nuclear Association.

use this capital in such a way that unlocked a basic knowledge in the language and function of nuclear physics and the workings of a nuclear reactor. And this awareness would not have been driven by any other interest apart from the Fukushima accident as Eiko considers herself first and foremost a graphic artist as this is the area she is trained and continues to work in.³

She explained a bit more about her use of Twitter:

Some of the scientists who have published proper papers, somebody who is working internationally, if you are lucky they will respond to your question. Most of them seem to be generous with their information. I asked a couple of them about iodine, and actually the radiation level in my flat [in Edinburgh] and my mum's place [in Iwaki-shi] are the same. It's quite interesting. Another friend in Stockholm said the radiation is even higher than here inside the house! It's all coming from radon, some radioactive substance coming from inside the stones, natural stones and stuff. One of the scientists was talking to me on Twitter about it. He said it could have been the radon, there are quite a lot of stones in Europe that have it naturally, it's just in the atmosphere.

If the earthquake itself provided a window of opportunity for the Japanese women of this study to reach out beyond their daily routines of home and work and become active participants within their local communities, then the post-earthquake nuclear crisis created an environment that encouraged my discussants not just to expand their understanding of nuclear physics but to critically appraise the actions of the Japanese government and the news coverage that originated in both Japan and the UK. Attitudes were varied and also hinged on their family's proximity to the disaster and their own decisions on how to best approach a potential visit home with small children.

³ In Chapter 6 I have described how Eiko first responded to the Tohoku Earthquake by creating posters that she passed out to neighbours and local businesses in order to raise awareness of the gravity of the situation faced by the people of Eastern Japan.

This chapter will focus on the topics that my informants raised in the course of our discussions about the disaster that struck Japan in March 2011 with the emphasis on how the Fukushima crisis in particular seemed to affect their decisions to return to Japan for the summer and the more quotidian concerns this raised, how the media coverage of the crisis seemed to alter their relationship with media as representative of the truth, and how this newly developed scepticism brought about a new evaluation of the efficacy of the aid sent to Japan from Britain.

9.2 Family Concerns and Local Issues

There were degrees of difference between Eiko and Yumiko, who would be taking their children to Japan for the summer after the crisis, and Yumi, who would not. This difference was not due to any disregard for the children's well-being but was based on the mother's sense of attachment to place and family. Eiko and Yumiko were both keen to return to their native regions (Iwaki-shi and Akita/Sendai respectively) in part because these were the areas most affected by both tsunami damage and nuclear radiation, and also because it was essential to them that they assess for themselves how the multiple issues of the earthquake and nuclear crisis had affected their friends, families and the surrounding countryside. Eiko's family home was close to the nuclear reactor and the area was clearly within the range of any harmful radiation had the reactor gone into complete meltdown. As a native of the region, Eiko had invested the most amount of time in seeking out definitive information to help justify her desire to safely visit her family with the children, therefore she chose to learn as much as possible about any potential danger and what constituted safe or unsafe levels of radiation before travelling back home. Her search for knowledge and information about the nuclear threat also served as a silent riposte to her German mother-in-law's strident opposition to the children visiting the region, an opposition that was fuelled by the sensational headlines that were published by German newspapers at the time. These German headlines proved to be a particular provocation for Eiko, so much so that her husband refused to translate the more outrageous headlines for her and dismissed them as rubbish. Needless to say the decision to travel back to Iwaki-shi had created some friction between Eiko and her mother-in-law, which she tactfully described as (having) "a little difficulty communicating with my mother-in-law at the moment." Eiko was also somewhat put

out that her mother-in-law had not bothered to ask about the well-being of her mother in Iwaki-shi and instead berated her for her decision to take the children to the area.

In Chester, Yumiko had more straightforward concerns about the effects of the crisis on her holiday in Japan in July 2011 and on her lifestyle in the UK, specifically about the increased difficulty in obtaining particular food items that originate from the Tohoku region. Throughout our interview she would refer to the Fukushima disaster as “the nuclear thing” and clearly took a broader based perspective on the events of March 11 with regard to how this made a difference to her immediate family and friends both here and in the affected area. She had hoped to take her two young daughters (aged 7 and 5 at the time of the interview) for a swim at the local beach nearest Sendai as she feels the sea is far too cold for the children to swim in Britain, however, she was mildly disappointed to hear that the beach was not being used for leisure purposes that summer as a mark of respect for the victims of the tsunami.⁴ Despite her friends in both the UK and Japan suggesting that it might not be the best time to visit home, Yumiko was keen not just to see for herself the damage done to the area and to visit her family and friends, but also to help the local economy in her own small and personal way. At a later interview, Yumiko was pleased to relate that, despite the restrictions the local community had placed on using the seaside for leisure, they had rallied together to produce the customary summer parades in Sendai and she showed me photographs of her daughters in *yukata*⁵ and participating in a parade. She was satisfied that the decision had been taken by the neighbourhoods to return to happy traditions and therefore regular life rather than focus on an extended period of mourning.

Prior to her visit to Sendai, Yumiko bemoaned the difficulty she was having in obtaining her preferred imported food items after the tsunami, and now with the added threat of ground radiation she had resigned herself to facing these restrictions for the next year at least. She remarked that the price of imported rice from Japan had gone up, but she was most frustrated about the restrictions placed on the purchase of *natto*,

⁴ When I expressed surprise that there were still parts of the seaside that were usable, Yumiko assured me that this was because most of the damage caused by the tsunami was inland.

⁵ A *yukata* is a traditional summer kimono, lightweight and unlined for comfort during the warmer weather. It is worn by both men and women.

fermented soy beans with a characteristic strong odour that are normally eaten for breakfast:

My kids love *natto*. It's very nutritious. My husband eats almost every Japanese food except *natto*. And *konnyaku*?⁶ It's so healthy, no calories. We have the *konnyaku* diet, *konnyaku* sweets, everything made out of *konnyaku*. But these things come from the Tohoku area so in the supermarkets [here] you can only buy one pack because we can't import it anymore. This packet of *natto*, it's made in the Sendai area, its completely crashed because of the tsunami and now the nuclear thing, they can't produce anymore, there is *natto* bean but it might not be safe. And the factory that made the packages is gone, so there aren't any packages. My sister said that even in Japan you are limited to how many you can buy, but now it is getting easier. But here you are still limited.

They were now restricted to purchasing only one packet per customer from the large Chinese supermarket in Liverpool. Yumiko is also able to obtain Japanese food items from the fortnightly market organised by the Japanese Saturday school at Lymm high school, but even this service had been experiencing rising costs and shortages. She was pleased that a local friend had managed to obtain the live bacteria necessary for the production of *natto*, but the complicated production process involved staying up for 48 hours in order to turn the beans and maintain the correct temperature. Yumiko was grateful for the home-produced *natto* but acknowledged that such a labour intensive process was an obstacle to a steady domestic supply.

Yumi, a Tokyo native living in the Manchester suburb of Marple, did not focus on any of the more technical aspects of radiation fallout as Eiko had done, nor was she particularly interested in Japanese foodstuffs and as such was the least preoccupied with the more quotidian challenges presented by the accident at the nuclear reactor. Her annual visits to Tokyo were based more on a desire to present a viable and alternative language and culture for her son T, but her desire to return to Japan for their usual holiday was put on hold for summer 2011 due to her fears of excessive

⁶ *Konnyaku* is a jelly-like food product made from the starch of the konjac tuber. It is a very low calorie food item. Source: <http://japancentre.com/categories/konnyaku> Accessed 20 July 2013.

radiation throughout Japan and it was convenient for her to follow the advice provided by TEPCO that summer. Yumi was assured that her mother, father and sister were all fine and carrying on with life in Tokyo in the normal manner, having experienced very little disruption to their routine since March 11, so instead Yumi and her husband had decided that they would spend their summer holiday that year camping in France, first in Normandy and then on to Brittany, a holiday that is more in keeping with the sort of break taken by young British middle class families:

We normally go (to Tokyo) in the summer because we have to work during the other times of the year. This year we decided not to because I am still concerned about the nuclear fallout. The power plants...they haven't resolved the problem yet... I can't see why I should have to take T back, to risk it, even though I am sure that the levels are low enough. Probably next year, the electricity company (TEPCO) said that, I'm not sure what the exact terminology was, contain it, I think, but they said it would take at least a year to make it safe.

I would argue that the above examples personify the articulation of home as both motherland and household and how the failed strategies of nuclear safety in Fukushima resulted in very specific "little tactics of the habitat" in order to maintain a viable domestic sphere in the UK whilst still keeping close familial ties with Japan (de Certeau 1984). Eiko used her academic links to increase her awareness of the nuclear threat in order to sustain the integral health of her family while in Japan and to ascertain the level of danger posed to her family in Iwaki-shi. Yumiko chose to reinforce her ties with Japan during the crisis in her quest for consumables that maintained the taste of her home region within the domestic sphere. Yumi, on the other hand, thought it best to exclude the geographical and physical bonds with Japan at least temporarily, thus pre-empting any contact with the potentially polluting threat of radiation. The reflections expressed by the women above resonate quite closely with Morley's search for the ways in which identity formation is driven by the conflict generated in the attempt to construct boundaries that repel otherness and maintain an imagined homogenous enclave, whether the material being excluded is cultural, social, or perhaps in this case, nuclear radioactivity (Morley 2000).

This process of restricting alterity takes on a very specific geographical perspective in Japanese society in the form of the concept of *uchi*, (as discussed in the introduction) a term that means home and hearth and the social state of inside or in-group, and implies feelings of warmth, safety and relaxation (cf. Bachnik 1983, Kondo 1990). Morley and Robins refer to *Heimat*, a German noun that has no equivalent in English but seems to correlate quite closely to *uchi* in that the term encompasses an emotional ideal of home and all that is connected with that concept such as safety and comfort (Morley and Robins 1995). For my informants operating within the context of both *uchi* and *Heimat*, the physical space of home and the gendered identity of woman as mother has come to represent not just the internal space and the domestic sphere but also the individual and personal strength and will to determine what should be excluded from the family space as well as what should be allowed. These women have positioned themselves as the ultimate gatekeepers and micro-managers in the face of a major geopolitical event whilst still upholding very specific Japanese identities for themselves, their homes and their families. The following sections will examine how published media, the internet and social networking sites were used by the women I interviewed to shape their views on the Fukushima crisis in a way that made this particular global incident into a local and very personal experience for them.

9.3 Perspectives on Twitter and Foreign Journalists

The majority of the women felt compelled to follow the unfolding of the March 11 disaster through online sources in conjunction with British news sources as outlined in the previous chapter. When asked if they had recognised a disparity between Western and Japanese news sources regarding the quality and the substance of the reporting, the focus fell on to the coverage of the Fukushima failure and the role of social media in creating a global and public window into the stricken region. At the time of the disaster, the major Japanese online newspapers had set up Twitter feeds that ran concurrently alongside the features and updates about the region, as did NHK as discussed previously. This provided a much needed public forum that served to provide readers both local and global with real-time eye-witness accounts of the fast changing situation on the ground. The women I discussed this issue with were not immune to the questions of transparency and truth in reporting and the perceived lack of information from official sources that began to emerge via Twitter. Another

problem, quite separate from the questions of the efficacy of the sanctioned news coming out of Tokyo, was that of the uninformed foreign journalist, who were identified as representing Western news outlets without any kind of valid knowledge. It became clear, then, that the function of social media and journalism played widely divergent roles with regard to the Fukushima crisis and this was acknowledged and acted upon by the majority of my informants.

There is no question or doubt that Twitter use and other forms of social media such as Mixi and to a lesser extent, Facebook, were crucial to the spread of information, the finding and reuniting of families and friends, and to the rescue and relief operation, so much so that Slater et al. have identified 3/11 as “the first natural disaster fully experienced through social media” (2012:94). Furthermore, the authors observe how in light of the Fukushima disaster the social networks and the digital civil society that has developed from its use became politicised as “effective forms of civil engagement” (ibid: 95). They further note that the efficacy of social media within the context of the relief effort was actually facilitated by the lack of governmental and technological infrastructure in the affected areas. Yumiko in Chester reiterated when she remarked that Twitter became the primary source for communication in the region because all other electronic forums and devices had ceased to function immediately after the tsunami, yet nearly everyone had a hand-held device that could access Twitter. Twitter use in this situation was not just limited to Japan, however, as all of the women I spoke to developed a reliance, in varying degrees, to its immediacy and broad outreach during the reporting of the crisis. Even if they did not access Twitter feeds themselves personally, they were keeping up to date by reading the Twitter feeds submitted by the public that accompanied the online news sites such as *Ustream* and *Asahi Shimbun* as Kazuko and Kimiko in Edinburgh had done.

When asked to make a direct comparison between the nature of the coverage between Western news sources and their Japanese counterparts, it was generally felt that the Western press was focussing much more on the nuclear disaster and sensational images, whereas, according to Eiko, the Japanese papers were emphasising the effect of the disaster on the broader aspects of everyday life in Tohoku such as industry and agriculture. In London, Mariko was bemoaning the fact that the overdramatic and emotive images chosen by the Western press to portray the human devastation in both

the press and the televised news was verging on the disturbing. On the Monday after the disaster, her 10 year old daughter U was sufficiently distressed at the onslaught of imagery over the weekend that she was frightening all the children at school with talk about the end of the world. Mariko said at the time that “these pictures and photographs are useful to let people know what is happening, but sometimes too much is too much and now they are frightening us.” As we discussed this issue after her Japanese language class on 17 March, Chika was also dismissive of the strong images in the British newspapers as she felt this was neither appropriate nor accurate. “I don’t know why they want to show all that drama, when actually the vast majority of Japanese people are just trying to go around their daily business even with food and petrol shortages and no electricity.” Chika put the use of sensational front page photographs down to the press’ lack of knowledge about Japan and Japanese people, saying that these reporters “should show more respect for the true spirit of the Japanese people and show how people are trying to get back to a normal life.”

That the foreign press was seen to sensationalise the catastrophe for the audience back home is the point Asan made with her description of the independent reporter who was excitedly relaying the news about the stench of death for the viewers back home in Chapter Eight. She continued in her praise for the BBC:

And I was so impressed by that level of sensitivity that BBC had. The best thing I like about BBC news is that they constantly tell the viewers the opinions of the viewers. You hear them (the BBC reporters) say, ‘we were told by the viewers...’ And then I checked on my Twitter, and then some people were writing to me that the BBC were the only people reporting this (information about the Daiichi plant). If the BBC started covering up all the frightening things and then the other channels can do anything they like, can’t they?⁷

Asan’s comments in the previous chapter clearly indicated a disregard for the uninformed reporter who was merely trying to sensationalise a tragic situation in as much as the destruction became a commodity in and of itself.

⁷ It is worth noting here that Asan has two Twitter accounts, one in her professional persona as a musician and artist and another for personal use. She is referring here to her professional account.

That many foreign reporters were dropped into Japan in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake was apparent, inasmuch as there was a lack of knowledgeable Western news staff in Japan at the time of the earthquake, a shortage that has been partly ascribed to the rise of the more newsworthy growth of China (Birmingham and McNeill 2012). Immediately after the disaster, journalists were dispatched to Japan who had no knowledge and very little information about the country (ibid). Ulf Hannerz (1996) credits the foreign correspondent with effectively shaping the picture of the world for those back home, a responsibility that was reiterated by the Channel 4 journalist Jon Snow during a seminar in November 2011 entitled “Role of Media in Responding to Disasters.”⁸ He offered a seasoned observation that in a time of global crisis the western audience would prefer to see a familiar face covering the incident as this confers a large degree of journalistic authority for those watching the events unfold in their homes. The news is the commodity and the news reporter becomes a commodity in their own right, and as such it becomes a matter of professional interest to pull in the viewers and readers in any manner possible. As Hannerz puts it, foreign correspondents become “the people you can trust to give you trouble” (1996:122). This perspective may be true of those trusted news organisations such as the BBC or from seasoned foreign reporters and familiar faces such as Jon Snow, but how does a televised news report rally such resources at short notice in a far away place and still expect the stories to be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve?

Giddens makes an observation that is of some use here, that the apparent display of trust and responsibility of news organisations is yet another symptom of modernity; that is, that there is a characteristic form of trust that requires systems of professional expertise in order to convey a truth with authority (1990). Presumably, if this trust to bring accurate and reliable information to the public, especially in a time of crisis, becomes nothing more than an unfulfilled promise, then the public will be within their rights to raise questions that they feel deserve to be addressed. And while some less-experienced foreign correspondents may have been rightly accused of ignoble

⁸ This seminar on disaster management was held on 30 November 2011 at the Wellcome Collection Conference Centre in London and was organised by the Japanese International Cooperation Agency UK (JICA UK) in conjunction with SOAS.

reporting, there are new issues that arise when the source of dishonourable reporting comes from native sources.

This was the issue addressed by Wataru Sawamura, the London Bureau Chief and European Editor of the *Asahi Shimbun* at the same seminar that hosted Jon Snow, who wholeheartedly argued that Japanese media was not just a mouthpiece of the government but that under the circumstances it is not a surprise that some stories got told and others did not. The threat of the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis and the unprecedented mass evacuation which resulted created a fast moving news situation in which it was to be expected that difficult choices were made regarding the stories that made it to publication. Sawamura observed that the allegations that arose regarding the less than accurate reporting of the major newspapers was inevitable in light of all the half-truths and rumours that circulated via social networking sites at the time of the accident, the point being that there is that much needs to be addressed, learned and rebalanced with regard to disaster reportage. Interestingly, Sawamura made one final observation, that there were also “issues with the intrinsic nature of a culture of people that try to escape their responsibilities”, and he gave the example of the recent Olympus scandal in which suspiciously large payments were made to middle men regarding acquisitions. This served to cover up heavy losses at the organisation and resulted in one of the largest financial frauds in Japanese history (BBC 2013).

9.4 The Dissolution of Trust

The Fukushima nuclear crisis saw the emergence of a particular scepticism towards the accuracy and veracity of the government sanctioned news reports regarding the true nature of the depth of the crisis at the Daiichi plant. This response began to emerge from the interlocutors shortly after the explosion of the first reactor at the Daiichi Nuclear Plant. It was aimed exclusively at Japanese sources (rather than Western) and seemed to initiate from the perceived misdirection of the press, but the mistrust grew to encompass the government’s lack of humanitarian response. Within the Edinburgh group, this dissolution of trust is best represented in a comparison between Wakako’s almost complete lack of confidence in the news that was emerging from Fukushima to Eiko’s belief that the government was not capable of hiding quite as much as Wakako was inclined to believe. Eiko’s assessment was based on her

mother's first hand experience in the region whereas Wakako's palpable anger was based on the perceived deliberate opacity of the official news sources. Although the earthquake and the tsunami were deemed to be unavoidable and unstoppable natural disasters, there was considerably more irritation directed towards the authorities in light of the Fukushima disaster. The officials were basically seen to be liars and shirkers of any responsibility or blame for the way in which this particular man-made crisis compounded the devastation wrought by nature just 24 hours earlier. The most important concern expressed by the women of the Edinburgh group was for the welfare of the Japanese people in the Tohoku region especially as they now faced the immanent threat of nuclear disaster, which to them should have been the ultimate priority of the government, yet the issue of human welfare appeared to be ignored and overlooked according to my informants, while government and TEPCO officials appeared to be more concerned with their own reputations and prospects.

In the cover article in *The Independent* newspaper published on 17 March 2011, less than a week after both the earthquake and the nuclear plant crisis, there were indications that the Japanese government was facing growing criticism at home of its handling of the catastrophe as the media began expressing its unease with the lack of progress in supplying the stricken population with the barest of essential goods and services (Buncombe 2011). The initial criticisms seem to stem from an acknowledgement that if the state was unable to care for its members in their time of need, how could they be trusted to, or trusted to oversee, the transparent flow of information to its citizens?

This distrust may have been compounded by the harrowing photos in the press of children being scanned for radiation levels by energy workers in full body safety suits, an observation reinforced by Wakako's comment that there seemed to be a disregard shown by the officials for the health of the children in the region, who had been denied access to safe, radiation free, fresh fruit and vegetables because of the government's inability to provide for even the most vulnerable during this period. What Wakako was most enraged by was the perception that the government was not doing enough to help the local people out of the predicament.

The lack of a perceived physical or organised response on behalf of the organisations she viewed as responsible (which she generically referred to as “the government”) was exacerbated by her insistence that the official information being provided by Japanese news sources other than NHK were inherently inaccurate and misleading:

So I switched everything off except NHK, because they are telling us the facts. We don't know what really happened because we don't really trust our government. We don't know what the government assistance is doing, or how they are doing, and the ex-prime minister said we are trying our best, but I don't think so and I still don't think so and all I could do is give a little bit of money donation, and what else can we do to help people? It's a great frustrating moment, and it hurts me, really. And not only me, the people are radiated. We just want the government to look after the people there. That is the biggest concern.

Wakako's confidence in the NHK was well placed. In their volume on the Tohoku disaster, Birmingham and McNeill quote the NHK head of broadcasting Noriyuki Ogi as saying that in the confusion of events a reporter noticed an explosion on one of the screens but there was no word from TEPCO, NISA (Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency) or the government about this incident. NHK nonetheless announced that “just in case, anyone who is outside please go inside and stay out of the rain”, thereby positioning themselves as the only official source that was willing to warn the public about any further potential danger (2012: 97).

Wakako's scepticism was driven by her husband's opinions on the matter, although she did not see any immediate contradiction between her doubts about the veracity of the press as she was specifically referring to Japanese sources other than NHK, whereas she seemed to have implicit faith in her husband's interpretation of Western news sources. She deferred uncritically to what she accepted as his greater knowledge in these things because he was accessing a variety of online sources, personal research that was primarily driven by his concern for her health over an impending visit to her family in Tokyo:

And now I'm going back to Tokyo, which is two or three hundred kilometres from the area and my husband is so concerned about it and his knowledge is far greater, much more than me about the facts because he is reading and listening to BBC and CNN and also the [other] countries' media who are translating it into English, like Italian and French news reports, but the real leadership is not telling their own people in Japan, like in Tokyo city and they don't tell us the real facts, about how radioactive it is and how bad it is. I don't know what to believe now.

Eiko was compelled to reply to Wakako's challenging assessment primarily because of her concern for her family's livelihood, but she was clearly critical and frustrated about how she felt the situation was being dealt with on a day to day basis, "I don't know. I don't think the government can lie that easily."

However, from this initial statement of trust Eiko was compelled to relate how the government's lack of direct action was affecting the local population:

But the bad thing is that they can't really escape from the radiation because the government is so concerned and everyone is so concerned but no courier is coming with petrol, so local people don't have petrol, so they couldn't escape either. And no food came in and no[t even] water came in, no electricity or no gas, which luckily my mum had them all because she is on a farm. Each time I call my mum and ask her and she says well today it was this and that, and they scanned the local neighbour, who is working in the outside field, and he didn't have high radiation level, [but it is] just simple scan, not testing precisely at all. But I was only concentrating on what was happening in my family so I didn't actually know what was happening in Tokyo.

What Eiko was trying to convey was that she was aware that the local people were being kept up to date with the fluctuations in the levels of radioactivity but she felt that the same information was not being communicated in Tokyo. However she was quick to note that Tokyo was in turn letting the local people of Tohoku down, something she took very personally as her father's early death when she was quite young had cemented her relationship with the entire village; in fact she felt closely

connected with the residents since they had rallied to support her family through some very difficult years. Her mother's livelihood is based on growing flowers, but as the agricultural industry was more severely affected by the threat of nuclear fallout than the initial damage caused by the earthquake (Kawato 2012), Eiko's mother was finding it difficult to get back on her feet several months later:

My mum is a florist and she was saying that no one is buying anything from them now. It's really hard for the locals not to have proper income, then Tokyo doesn't really do anything, they never come and talk to them about people at all, and the government is not really doing anything, really little, no financial support.

Eiko acknowledged that the power plant had been set up in a region that needed work, that wouldn't offer much resistance to the potential of life threatening nuclear waste on the doorstep, yet this was a plan that would not even provide electricity for local residents but for Tokyo.

The placement of nuclear power stations in the poorer or more deprived areas of the country ensured that these controversial industrial projects went up in areas where the local resistance to such works would be overshadowed by the promise of jobs and permanent work in an agricultural society more familiar with seasonal employment (Kingston 2012). Aldrich notes that in the Japanese case the government was complicit with TEPCO in manipulating public opinion with regard to the advancement of nuclear power and sought to build the power plants in locations that had weaker social capital as those sites with, for example, vocal and active fishermen's cooperatives would be sufficiently strong enough to block such a project (2012). But Eiko's trust in the government's proclivity towards honest and open presentation of the facts was ultimately misplaced. In fact the government and TEPCO were less than truthful regarding the full extent of the damage to the power plant and the subsequent potential for widespread nuclear damage (cf Birmingham and McNeill 2012, Elliot 2013). While local leaders were calling for assistance and information for stricken residents, the reply from Tokyo was a deafening silence (ibid). The NPOs, NGOs and volunteer groups that raced into the region in the immediate aftermath were crucial to the transition from disaster zone to organised

relief, yet this response was built from the previous tragedy of the Kobe earthquake in 1995 (Avenell 2012).

The acute mistrust of Japanese news sources and government authorities was not limited to the women I interviewed and the presence of friends outside of Japan proved to be a handy resource for the comparison of news reports for those within the country who may have felt frustrated with vague news reports and perhaps misleading data being provided internally. Yumi in Marple reported that a friend had asked her look into Western sources in order to ascertain for himself the truth and accuracy of the information that was released regarding radiation levels after the Fukushima crisis. She described how:

A friend asked me about the news reporting here (in the UK). He thought that the Japanese media was not reporting the true nature of the (Fukushima plant) damage so he asked me to check the news sites here, just *The Guardian* and the BBC, and it turned out that they were, well the *Asahi Shimbun*, were reporting the same thing.

Clearly there was sufficient criticism of the government's handling of the crisis within Japan to make such a request seem completely reasonable. Kazuko noted that when she was visiting the Ustream site⁹ in the first week of the crisis that the concurrent Twitter feed was implying exactly this point, "that people couldn't get information from within Japan, about radiation, and they had to get it outside of Japan. That the Japanese government is maybe hiding something." Birmingham and McNeill outline how symbiotic relationship between the Japanese press club system and organisations such as, in this case, the government, TEPCO and NISA locks the big newspapers and television companies into a specific relationship with their sources and discourages independent investigation (2012). The news teams were relying on the government and TEPCO for their information. In fact it took two months before TEPCO admitted that the Fukushima reactor had gone into meltdown (Sawamura 2012).

⁹ Ustream was a live video sharing site that was temporarily made accessible by NHK in order to provide continuous coverage by and for the public of the disaster. There was also a simultaneous Twitter feed running alongside. See Chapter 6 for clarification.

Upon Yumiko's return to Chester from her visit back home in July 2011, she talked about the devastation of Sendai – buildings that look normal on the outside but the yellow tape surrounding them indicates that they are unsafe for occupation and are due for demolition. She also commented on the experiences of her friends, how the complexities of distributing aid and funds to those in need were a reflection of the overall inefficiency of the government with regard to the needs of the area. Her closest friend has been lucky – despite her house being destroyed she had been offered accommodation by her company for herself and her daughter, but she still faced the prospect of paying off two large mortgages, one on the newly built house that was destroyed (the land has been rendered unfit to build on because of instability) and on whatever cost her new accommodation will be. Her friend was not sure if there would be any insurance payout on the lost property and is not holding out much hope for any compensation. And so the trials and tribulations of the people of Tohoku continue, and will continue, into the foreseeable future, as will their reservations about the efforts of their central government.

Lebra noted that Japanese women have a particular indifference to politics that may be rooted in “their trust and reliance on governmental leadership, their habit of compliance and their aversion to imposing their will upon others” (Lebra 1984:283). I would argue that in this particular time of crisis, the strong sense of compassion and community the women I spoke to experienced with regard to the people of Tohoku illustrates that this observation is no longer valid.¹⁰ These sentiments have taken on a global perspective whereby my participants engaged with and displayed empathy with those who are experiencing unforeseen, unpredictable circumstances of despair through means that could have been perhaps avoided. The social networks and community memberships they established before becoming British residents still have vital resonance and this connection with others has served, in this instance, to bring about questions and very few answers regarding what constitutes the truth from those in power. One year after the Fukushima crisis, Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda, who has since replaced the beleaguered Naoto Kan, who was in office at the time of the disaster, stated that “no individual was to blame” for what had happened, a statement

¹⁰ It is possible to argue that this may never have been the case for Japanese women. Kinsella (2000) argues that mothers' groups in the 90s were instrumental in lobbying the Japanese government for censorship laws for some types of *manga*. And Sato (2003) notes that Japan has a long tradition of upper class feminists and intelligentsia since the 1930s.

that was meant to publicly absolve the nuclear industry of responsibility (Birmingham and McNeill 2012:181). The result was that none of the TEPCO officials were prosecuted, and by 2012 many of the executives who had quietly stepped down from their positions of responsibility had found lucrative employment in other placements in the Japanese energy sector (ibid).

9.5 The Donation Issue

The question of the efficacy of the various donation methods that arose in the wake of the crisis became another issue that was mentioned as a subject of concern by some of the women I spoke to. If the reported and perceived handling of the Fukushima crisis was causing concern among my informants then it was not a such a huge step to begin to consider the organisation of the huge fundraising drive that began worldwide immediately after the earthquake and tsunami. This particular angle also emerged in the press within days of the earthquake happening, with an article published on 17 March reporting that a British aid organisation was forced to abandon a mission to the disaster zone due to the failure of Japanese diplomats to arrange the necessary paperwork (Milmo 2011) and an editorial comment in the *London Evening Standard* on 16 March accusing the British Embassy in Japan of not doing enough to enable British charities to function properly. Japan was clearly overwhelmed by scale of its crisis, and the total destruction of the national and local infrastructure in the Tohoku region and impending threat of the nuclear crisis seemed to leave the authorities with no clear or visible plan to urgently address the humanitarian needs of the displaced population (Cohen 2011).

In Chika's case this concern was triggered by a particular online article but, similar to Eiko's experience, she was able to refer to her husband's knowledge for additional insight. Chika was concerned that the money collected in the name of the British Red Cross was not going directly to Japan, that instead the funds would be used to address administrative needs first before trickling through to Japan in the form of tangible aid. In light of the vast sums of money being donated it is no surprise that concern developed early on both within the press and filtering down to my informants about the ultimate destination of so much good will. By the time I met with Yumiko in Chester on 30 March 2011, she was pleased to report their successful fundraising for

the Red Cross in Japan of £7,000 with their giant *maiko* doll alongside them, but she also reported the rumours she had been hearing:

There are lots of stories of people collecting money in the name of Japanese and doing a con, making a donation and it all disappears. There was a collection bucket in a small town and no one was watching it and it got stolen, and that happened in Japan. We never saw that kind of thing in Japan before.

Yumiko's concerns addressed the nature of greed and duplicity that stemmed from the free flowing generosity witnessed after the catastrophe, but there were other concerns that took into account the administrative difficulties and red tape of charity organisations who were seen to be less than clear as to the actual use that the vast sums of money collected were directed towards.

Chika began her Japanese language class on 23 March 2011 with a one minute silence for the earthquake and tsunami victims and preceded it with a short lecture on the humbling power of nature and how man is powerless to stop the devastation that is brought on when these natural forces run their course, which included a reference to the unforeseen Fukushima crisis. Chika was strikingly dressed in all black save for a red beaded necklace and this seemed to be a well considered reflection of her internal feelings at the loss of life suffered by the Tohoku region. Her attire that evening was in sharp contrast to the usual bright colours, contrasting patterns and kitschy accessories she usually favours. When the lesson was formally over Chika addressed the issue of donations. This was a particularly relevant topic for her as her husband C works in the charity sector and between them they had been trying to sort out what the most practical and useful donation forum would be. In my own attempt to be involved with the humanitarian effort in some small way I had brought with me several of the donation flyers that Eiko had made in order to pass them out to the others but Chika was quick to suggest that donations to the Red Cross might not be the best forum because there was no way to guarantee that the monies donated would actually go to Japan. She said she would investigate this issue herself but that meanwhile she had devised a small donation box (which incorporated her hand drawn language mascot, Big Headed Man) that she would personally hand over to whichever organisation she felt was the most viable quake related charity that she could find (she

ultimately handed her donations to the Japanese Embassy). We talked about this after the class and she said that this opinion was in response to an article published in the *New York Times* online on 17 March entitled *Postcards from Japan: Tohoku, Tokyo and New York*.¹¹ The article opens with one of the images of grief and misery that Chika had been disparaging earlier as being characteristic of Western media practices; an elderly Japanese man sits in the snow next to the detritus of what may have been his home, his face contorted in grief. The article itself makes no mention of the questionability of the Red Cross or other charity agencies yet this is the article provided the catalyst for Chika to review the donation situation with additional information from her husband.

In Edinburgh, Kazuko's scepticism about how the government was dealing (or not dealing) with the situation fell on to the topic of donations when she wondered aloud "But all these donations, where do they go? Do they just get spent?" No one at the table was able to answer this question, although Wakako mentioned that she, too, had been worried about how to best determine the most efficient means of giving. She had received an email from a friend asking who would be the best recipient of a donation, Red Cross or Oxfam, and Wakako suggested that donations should go to the Japanese Consulate in Edinburgh, as she had done, because that was the only organisation she felt could be trusted to do the right thing. Ultimately, however, those who did not examine the question of the efficacy of the aid organisations such as Eiko and Yumiko remained pleased and satisfied with their efforts as they felt certain that they had done the best they could given the circumstances.

The key word that ran, and continues to run, through the fundraising campaigns for the people of Tohoku is 'support'. Fundraisers seek support for Japan, and whether or not this takes a monetary form is almost beside the point. The fundraisers seek expressions of support from the general public to post on their websites, just as the women I interviewed acted as they did in order to offer support to their country. The word is particularly evocative; although terms such as aid and assistance were also used, the overwhelmingly favoured term for the compassion shown by the general public towards the people of eastern Japan was 'support'.

¹¹ <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/newsdesk/2011/03/postcard-from-japan-tokyo-tohoku-and-new-york.html> First accessed 30.03.11

9.6 Conclusion

There was the inclination for the Japanese women I spoke to voice a kind of “survivor’s guilt” – in fact Kazuko actually named it as such. Frustrated by the distance between the natives and the homeland, they felt aggravated at not just their inability to be of any physical assistance but also an irritation at not being in a position to fully understand what the rest of Japan was experiencing. The women felt guilty because they were living in comfort while others were struggling without sufficient food, housing, energy and other basic goods. This search or quest for greater understanding and comprehension of the lived experience of those who were suffering and struggling half a world away was further compounded by their dissatisfaction of the poor handling by the press and the authorities of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant.

With the development of the nuclear crisis, the public world of the Japanese government and energy organisations came in for scrutiny and were found to be lacking. This articulation of the public into the private domains of the home gave the women of this study the opportunity to share the experience of the disaster in ways that opened up new opportunities for a personal critical engagement not just with their communities as the earthquake and tsunami had done, but with the nature of media itself and representations of power and authority. The nation is a thing of “great cultural resonance” and this resonance is truly embedded in how my informants felt about themselves as Japanese women in light of the disaster (Hannerz 1993, in Morley 2000). This particular event, with its particularly harrowing levels of death and destruction illustrate how, despite the claims by some writers that a borderless world is now inevitable (Ohmae 1994), the cultural affiliations of home are permanently imbued in one’s definition of self. It is possible to state that the question of identity becomes something altogether different – the duality of home as origin and as place of belonging become more emphatic at times of crisis. In this instance globalisation can be seen as reinforcing the integrity of native home and culture.

Chapter Ten: Conclusion: Of Narratives, Networks and Practice

10.1 Introduction

The introductory chapter presented the research question that sparked this project- What are Japanese women watching on television and why are they watching it? This thesis has sought to analyse not just what they are watching, but how and why. What has emerged is that the women I interviewed do not access media technologies and practices in isolation. The practices and the technologies that the women refer to in this thesis are all part of the social networks of their homes and their communities both here in Britain and in Japan. The networks that serve to constitute the social self are continuously reinforced and reiterated, even when participating as apparent individuals on the internet. I have also included examples of how this media use is negotiated within the self, for example when Kimiko chose to spend extensive amounts of personal time watching Japanese dramas. I have incorporated particular examples of Japanese normative discourses as hermeneutic devices, to serve as cultural reference points in order to suggest ways in which media practice reflects and provokes changes in the social self. This has also included examples that reflect how these discourses are performed, which in turn reveals how the gendered self is conceived of and performed by my interlocutors with respect to their media practice.

The main units of analysis that have been presented here are the narratives provided by the women. The issue of life changes is a featured element of their biographies, both unexpected changes and changes that they had instigated for themselves in the course of their lives. The changes in the making of home and self are part of this process that sees media practice as a quotidian element that emerges from regular and habitual engagement. In other words the women I spoke to are actively creating new networks here in Britain while creating a new sense of home and self, using media to support these changes. This process continues alongside the maintenance of networks back in Japan while continuing to uphold a clear Japanese self and the idea of Japan as home. I reiterate that with respect to this particular study there was nothing to be analytically gained in treating media texts or spaces as independently embedded features within other social spaces. This kind of approach would only have served to essentialise the medium and the text and detract from the subjectivities that are under

investigation. Although I have isolated media technologies and experiences as chapter headings in order to give some coherence to the analysis, I have examined the specificity of the individual experience within the wider cultural and social context. This research then is not about the media as such but an examination of how these texts and contexts serve the individual in a performative sense, that is, how they have internalised these elements as part of their life story and as part of how they came to be Japanese women in the UK.

10.2 Reflexivity Revisited

Having come to the end of writing up my data, I stopped to review my field notes one last time. I found myself reflecting on a single incident that I did not include at the beginning, yet has lingered in the back of my mind throughout the writing process. When I made my first contact with the mothers of the Lymm Saturday Japanese School in November 2009, I brought my good friend and participant, Mariko, with me. As a non-Japanese outsider to this group, I thought it would be helpful to have Mariko in case any of the parents might have questions in Japanese. As it turned out, she was almost too helpful. After my brief presentation, Mariko stood and addressed the group in Japanese. I managed to catch a few words here and there, but she spoke to the group for about fifteen minutes. I began to feel uneasy after the first ten. What could she possibly be talking about? My own presentation had lasted about ten minutes. There was occasional laughter coming from the mums sitting with their children, some with Western partners. Whatever she was saying, it seemed entertaining enough. When she finished, I asked her what she had said. “Don’t worry Sylvie-chan. I just talked to them about you and your work. It’s fine.” I left it at that, yet I was made acutely aware of my standing as an outsider, an intruder, into this finely recreated alcove of Japan.

I have considered this incident from many angles. What should be acknowledged here is the process by which I have come to know my position as an anthropologist, and as ‘the other’. My own engagement with my interlocutors took on a multiplicity of roles, as researcher, as American, as a mum and as a non-white insider into British social dynamics. Arguably to both my interlocutors and myself, I inhabit the West with the positioning of both a native and an outsider.

I felt that this indeterminate subjectivity was crucial in the data I gathered, and the means by which it was collected. The anthropological goal is to make inductive generalisations through the experiences we come to share with our interlocutors. As researchers, we strive to understand their processes of thinking and acting through individual case studies, an ethnography of the specific, where “new norms emerge in experiments with life” (Das 2007:63). Understanding and knowledge can only be arrived at through the continual processes of experiencing and questioning. I have come to have a better appreciation for these processes, and I can only hope that my understanding and knowledge continue to grow as I develop as an anthropologist.

10.3 A Brief Summary

I refer here to the original research question, what were the Japanese women I interviewed watching on television? It seems that by and large they were not watching a whole lot of television at the time of the interview process, but this does not detract from the significant role this medium has had in their lives, and this is reflected by the fact that this is the longest chapter of the thesis. Had this research been conducted a few years earlier, before the saturation of internet connectivity, or now in 2014 with the increased sales of DVD box sets for popular television series, I am certain that the results would have been different, yet just as complex. The interviews indicate that there is a broad distinction between the uses of mediated forms that can be ascertained from this study. Television was used by my interlocutors to provide information and insight into the social and individual mores and behaviour of their newly adopted homeland. Most of the women expressed ambivalence with regard to current television programmes but still engaged with the medium here and there for information (primarily in the form of news) and leisure. Conversely, each participant had turned to the internet as their primary source of media pleasure and as a source of engagement with their Japanese selves. However, this change in media use does not undermine the overall relevance of television as a form of media practice in their lives. What had emerged initially from the questionnaires and expanded upon in the interview process was that television was, for the most part, an important resource that contributed to their emergence as Japanese cosmopolitans. As young children at home with their families in Japan, television was a presence in each of their households regardless of whether they were

granted unlimited access to children's programmes as in Wakako's case, or if their viewing time was rationed as with Yumiko's example.

The participants are enthusiastic and flexible internet users in ways that allowed them to have continuing and fairly contemporaneous access to the Japan they have left behind, thus minimising the dissonance of their transnational lives. This contact took multiple online permutations, for example, accessing Japanese dramas or through the use of social network sites and micro blogging sites that depend on the construction of the kinds of social networks that are familiar to these women as gendered members of Japanese society.

By considering their media biographies practices both here in the UK and in Japan, it became apparent that popular culture texts and media technologies were used to initiate and sustain personally meaningful social experiences that moved them beyond the boundaries of the domestic sphere (I am including online experiences here). Experience with media use is seen to manipulate the discursive barriers of *uchi/soto* and this serves to inspire new expressions of *ikigai*. The televisual images which worked to breach the given distinction between inside and out not only undermined culturally determined notions of otherness they also function to make otherness seem appealing. But these processes were not solely due to exposure to television. Other forms of media were implicated as inspiring the agency of these women to explore and participate in a life outside of Japan. I have provided examples of how radio, books, magazines and home movies also worked to inspire agency in a way that undermined normalising discourses for my interlocutors. *Uchi* then becomes a site of power/knowledge, a place where the restrictive properties of discursive social practices (power) become productive sites of agency and knowledge. This premise is in agreement with Foucault's call for an assessment of space as a site of institutional power and by extension the forms of agency that emerge from this consideration (1980).

There are many positions that can be identified on the spectrum that lies between internet text reader and text producer and this runs the gamut between communication on network sites between friends and blogging for an unknown audience. Because of its potential for new sociabilities, the internet has become a site for the negotiation of

the world of *seken*, among other things. For example, both Mariko and Chika in London at one point during the research used their own personal blog sites to address, and be addressed by in return, two very different types of imagined audience. Both women have turned to teaching Japanese not just as a means to an income, but as a way to create networks with and between others in their community that is integral to their participation in their adopted society. The need or desire to communicate in general and to inform others of Japanese culture in particular to the sphere outside of the home that the participants have indicated so far may be viewed as a transference of the *uchi/soto* conceptual category and this is obviously super-facilitated by the modern media and information technologies they choose to use.

I have indicated that there is an identifiable quality in the way that Japanese women are engaging with media that reflects their own personal interpretation of their social origins. One example of what I am referring to as expressed through media use is the articulation of the responsibility placed upon the gender as the propagators of Japanese identity. There are several examples of gender performativity that the mothers of this study can be seen to personify in different ways. As can be expected from women who have lived their lives with a continuous media presence in the household, much of their childrearing practice involves elements of media practice with regard to their role as providers of a Japanese sense of self to their children. To impart a sense of awareness of Japan as a source of identity, or “knowing their Japanese side” as both Kimiko and Yumi phrased it, is an ethical responsibility to their children that they as Japanese mothers are compelled fulfill. Media is imbricated within this network of socialising processes, especially as explicated by Yumi, who limits access to (Western) television as a matter of course, but was happy to incorporate language learning DVDs oriented to children as part of her son’s Japanese language learning.

The Tohoku Earthquake of 2011 offered an unexpected example of how media practice is in flux – and how their own sense of self and self-representation can be emphasised, or manipulated to achieve specific outcomes such as fundraising, enquiring about nuclear reactors or making decisions about returning to Japan with their children despite the fears of potential exposure to radiation. The disaster also challenged integral notions of a bounded sense of localism. The boundaries of subject and place suggested by this were broken down and rendered useless or permeable by

the influx of media content streaming into the home, this stronghold of familiarity and turning the home into sites of virtual devastation. The disjuncture that would have normally existed between the sleepy seaside villages and farming communities of the eastern seaboard of Japan became blurred as the global viewing audience shared in the suffering and loss of neighbourhoods that would have otherwise remained hidden to the rest of the world.

10.4 Unexpected Findings

The writer Malcolm Gladwell noted in a recent interview in *The Observer* (2014) that he learned more about the world from playing board games than anything else, when he came to the realisation that what happens on the board has less to do with the rules of the game than with your relationships with the people you are playing. Gladwell's observation is reflected in Foucault's interest in what he had come to realise over the course of his research, that is, that we as people and as a society are constantly engaged in 'truth games' that seem to compel us as individuals to view ourselves as both subject and object (15:1988). This in turn harkens back to the premise of 'technologies for the self' as set out in the introduction.

In order try and explicate the merging of truth games and technologies to my own satisfaction, I asked the following question of my research, namely, is there just one self with an internal toolkit that consists of social practice sustained through embodied social relations? It is difficult to avoid industrial-type terminology when researching a discourse of technologies in this manner, namely, as constitutive elements of the self. Kondo describes the process of Japanese self-making as a kind of crafting, in that her co-workers co-opted specific strategies and discourses in the making of a "referential self" (1990:35). If the components that constitute the self are internalised and presented only at the point of action, then the illusion may be that of a multiplicity of selves, a psychological chimera that shouldn't exist and perhaps doesn't. Although I argue that the self is constantly in a state of fluidity and change, to refer to this fluidity as some kind of instability is not a particularly lucid analogy. The women of this study are under no illusion as to who and what they are as they move meaningfully through the multiple roles of their lives as women of Japanese origin. And yet contestation and contradiction within the self does occur as is evidenced by their narratives after the Tohoku disaster. Kazuko especially expressed this as a

dichotomy between wanting to be in Japan with her family yet being tied to Edinburgh because of her responsibilities at home. The focus on practice that I have incorporated serves to create sense from such incongruities, and so the approach taken by my analysis has been necessarily phenomenological as I consider the personification of these practices in relation to the social world. The lived network of personal relationships, then, must be regarded as inherent in this study of identity-making through media and this inescapable motif of everyday life is interrogated throughout every chapter. The networks that support, sustain and nourish the Japanese sense of self are not an endpoint unto themselves. The networks through which the self and its multiplicity of expression are interconnected with other subjects and places and are themselves in a constant state of change, an observation that makes itself apparent as a result of the Tohoku earthquake.

Ultimately, these findings are not what I expected. I had expected to uncover much more blatant examples of how media texts themselves moved Japanese women to actualise lives for themselves outside of their native country. I was aware that social networks and social discourse would provide some element of background noise or colour to my investigation but I was surprised to see how these elements are intrinsically linked together to drive agency in the lives of my interviewees. I had also expected to see a much more intensive engagement with television and British media texts in general. I was surprised to find out just how great the appeal would be for Japanese-based material. I had also expected to see at least one or two of the participants would have installed the hardware necessary to receive JSTV, the international subscription channel for NHK. I had developed this presumption based on an anecdotal incident in that I was aware of one Japanese woman who lived in a council flat with her English husband and two children who had told me of her reliance on the Japanese language access to feel a connection with Japan. Instead, not one of my interlocutors had pursued this avenue of media engagement, primarily because of the high total cost of the hardware, installation and monthly subscription to the channel. Nor were any of the women I interviewed aware of anyone who had the service. Admittedly this was a shallow premise, and yet I had expected to observe a greater allegiance to the primary function of television as a home-based source of leisure and entertainment. Those with children had an even more ambivalent position with regard to television. They constantly struggle to restrict access to television and

prefer to exert some control over what and how much their children watch. This is similar to the parental restrictions that were placed on them as children. Both Yumi and Yumiko thought that limiting access to television was a good thing, and reiterated that too much television was not a positive or constructive activity for their children.

10.5 Gendered Considerations

I have started from the theoretical position that there is nothing to be analytically gained in treating media as an independently embedded feature within other social spaces as such a limiting perspective would subordinate the creative autonomy of the individual's engagement with media and deny them the authorship of an identity that is derived from social discourse and networks. Part of my theoretical position is based on the conclusion that a personal sense of cosmopolitanism runs through the life decisions of these women, specifically with regard to their life-changing decision to (move to and) remain in the UK. This position is supported by my argument that the domestic sphere is the foundation for the life practices that are the focus of the anthropological gaze. It should be apparent that I am not implying that a sense of (latent) cosmopolitanism or that a cosmopolitan outlook, is contingent on repeated viewing of *Bewitched* or *Little House on the Prairie*. I am suggesting, however, that such imagery, storylines, characters, scenery, clothing etc. played a part in producing a predisposition for some women to imagine a life, or how the lives of others, might be lived outside of Japan.

One of the questions Werbner (2008) asks about cosmopolitanism is whether it can be a quality of individuals. I would have to answer in the affirmative. There has to exist a deep-rooted motivation and overwhelming sense of personal agency to override the gendered strictures of Japanese society in order to live one's life abroad. The existing power that regulates these women's lives must be stretched, extended or subverted to achieve this. But on the other hand, transgression of these boundaries must exist hand in hand with limited and bearable ramifications if the number of women who make this move abroad is taken into account. This perspective gives rise to another consideration, that is, to understand if, or how, cosmopolitanism and nationalism compete with one another in order to give meaning to the Japanese gendered self. Cosmopolitanism incorporates a particular world view within its social framework whereas nationalism incorporates a particular local view within its social framework.

They may seem to be mutually exclusive in principle but in practice they are incorporated within the self and can only be expressed if, or when, the social actor deems the situation to be appropriate to do so. As I previously mentioned in Chapter Seven, Martin (2007) suggests that Japanese women in Britain have an opportunity to view Japan from the outside, allowing them to reassess aspects of their own culture. This in turn results in a heightened sense of their own Japanese identity and to developing an appreciation of both the positive and the negative aspects of both countries. But more significantly, Martin suggests that this disposition enables Japanese transnational women to adapt their behaviour accordingly and to navigate skilfully between the two societies. Clearly then, the ability to make sense of the technology and imagery that originate from “foreign” sources must somehow translate into the ability to absorb behaviours and identities that make it possible to successfully negotiate forums of shifting boundaries and moveable transnational subjectivities. There was never any overt evidence of a Japanese nationalist fervour among the interlocutors, yet there was plenty of evidence to indicate that they felt that their national origins were a source of particular cultural needs and requirements. This most often took the specific form of dietary needs as discussed by Wakako and Yumiko but all of the participants exhibited a social need for Japanese communication (or communication in Japanese), whether this was online or in real life circumstances.

Much of the anthropological literature implies that women in Japan are rarely seen as cosmopolitan in their own right (cf. Befu 1996). Instead they are considered only as the wives or daughters of cosmopolitan men (Kelsky 2001) but this perspective is at variance with their presence and profile in the West. The Japanese women of this study can be said to embody the split between state-imposed identity and personal identity, forged through the fluidity of national boundaries, imagination and personal agency. Yuval-Davis has pointed out that the first-wave women’s movement was internationalist from the outset, an approach that was expressed by Virginia Woolf’s declaration “As a woman I have no country” (2004:10). If many feminist writers have emphasised how women’s struggle for equality and liberation was formulated as part of their people’s national and anti-colonial struggles (ibid), then it is not a huge stretch of the imagination to suggest that the Japanese women of this study have internalised a personal practice of cosmopolitanism in order to achieve an experience of personal fulfilment (cf. Nava 2006). I have provided evidence in the interviews

and the life stories of the participants that suggest their experience is a gendered phenomenon constituted within gendered relations in both the UK and Japan. In addition, I argue that cosmopolitanism can be said to act upon the subjectivities of these women as a personal discourse that gives the individual comfort and fit in the social contexts that the person finds herself in. Butler uses the phrase “matrix of intelligibility” to describe the complexity of constructing the performative self with reference to the myriad of discursive practices available to the socialised self (1990:19).

Another facet with regard to the domestic sphere that I found was unexpectedly relevant is that the principle of home, or *uchi*, remains the same. As Hendry notes, the home in Japan, as elsewhere, “life begins in the family and it is here that one first builds up a picture of the world” (1987:22). The interviewees who had children acted on their responsibility as Japanese mothers and worked to imbue their children with an awareness of their heritage and made an effort to reiterate particular cultural practices for their children’s benefit. Martin (ibid) observed that this responsibility was acknowledged by the mothers in her study who felt an increased burden to pass on a knowledge and awareness of Japanese identity to their children here in the UK. The key, then, is not so much what my interlocutors were watching on television, or why, but where they were watching it. My interlocutors have all indicated how *uchi* becomes the origin of multiple strategies that work to maintain tradition while stimulating a transnational subjectivity through media practice.

Japanese culture is replicated through the children’s upbringing by reproducing the same restrictions and controls over television that the mothers themselves experienced as children. They don’t seem to question the premise that television viewing is a non-productive, inactive process that must be limited. The implication here is that children don’t know any better and can’t make these judgements for themselves so in order to produce good adults the child must be taught to control the body and the mind. Although the mothers are under no illusion that their half-*chan* children will in any way ever be mistaken for a proper, “real” Japanese person they try as much as possible to instil a Japanese sense of being in their children not just through media practices but through other culturally determined processes such as language education, and diet.

And certainly there is evidence in the narratives that confirm the premise that self-making and the production of everyday life are intimately connected to the modern consumer society (Douglas and Isherwood 1979). The women of this study are all seasoned or expert consumers not just of material goods but also cultural goods and carry with them a particularly versatile form of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1984). They have used these skills and knowledge to embody an everyday existence Britain for their own reasons, but with the final outcome resulting in living the life of a Japanese woman in Britain.

10.6 Limitations of the study

As the narratives began to accumulate it was clear that the most important data that was emerging had to be the information regarding the early mediated recollections of my interlocutors. If I had known this to be the case I would have been able to take this element into account at the very earliest opportunity. However, I was able to incorporate detailed questions about their mediated lives quite early on in the interview process as a result of the emerging data. Through the early use of questionnaires, I was able glean an indication that focussing on media biographies rather than thinking in terms of more recent experiences with media was the most efficacious way of collecting the information that would indicate how my interlocutors experience with media led to a Japanese gendered self that found a home and home life in the UK.

The use of media is implicit in the construction of reflexive subjectivities but there is much more going on than meets the eye initially. The question is, how is it possible to trace the innovation of identities and subjectivities through an investigation into the mediated lives of the multi-sited participants. This was an advantageous arrangement for me as researcher because it would provide unforeseen sources for data. But it offered its own challenges in that it became a logistic challenge to try and arrange interviews in a timely and consistent manner. As mentioned in Chapter Three, Yumi had completely forgotten about a meeting that we had arranged months in advance. The Edinburgh group was similarly difficult to organise meeting with and there were a couple of occasions where interlocutors had to drop out at the last minute due to unforeseen circumstances. These difficulties were frustrating for me as questions that

I had developed based on current events, such as the Winter Olympics in 2010, had to fall by the wayside due to cancelled interviews. And as advantageous as the interview process was for gathering media biographies, I was left feeling unsatisfied as an ethnographer that I was unable to engage in lengthier forms of participant observation with the women in Edinburgh and the Manchester area.

I have to admit, then, that I was conversely grateful for the research opportunity provided by the Tohoku disaster in March 2011. The devastation to the people of Japan provided a rich source of material for this study as my interlocutors responded to the images they were inundated with in different ways, each reflecting their own position in both Japanese and British society. Prior to this event, I had decided that the closing months of the research data were to focus on current events and other topics derived from British news sources. I am certain that this approach and the resulting data would have been less satisfying to me as a researcher than what I was able to gather as a result of Japan's shocking natural disaster.

10.7 Narration as Advantage

The changes to life and agency that I have referenced in this study are reflected in how the role of media changes in the lives of the interlocutors that in turn reflects how their lives have developed. The material that I have presented here must be considered an example of media biography. The women who participated have told me about themselves and their lives through the lens of gender and media practice. They are social participants who have distinct lives and stories, not indiscriminate members of an unknown audience. The use of narrative gives an understanding of their motivations and what their actions mean to them, that is, how their actions are imbued with meaning and significance. It is only by telling me what they think, or what they felt they were doing and why, that their narratives become a significant research tool. Having outlined some of the limitations of the use of narratives, I will now expand on the advantages.

The central methodological argument of this thesis is that in order understand how media technologies are implicated in the making of a Japanese self that lives in the UK, media biographies are essential to understand the experience and the practice of media in their lives to date. Narratives have provided the qualitative data because this

approach was the best fit research tool in order to effectively investigate what role media had in the social lives of the interlocutors. The rapid changes in modern communications technology have sensibly led to a more flexible interpretation of media use as a field of inquiry that challenges researchers to employ proven methods of text-reader engagement towards the analysis of new media audiences (cf. Ang 1991). It is obvious from the interviews I have conducted and present here that the viewing of mediated texts is only part of what these women are engaging with. The experience cannot be limited to textual content of the material but must be linked to how they experience their lives as Japanese nationals in the UK. Furthermore, it is clearly evident (if there was ever any doubt from the outset) that there was a greater inherent analytical flexibility that was derived from considering media use as practice rather than reception or consumption.

The narratives that I was provided with hinged on the relationship that I shared with my interlocutors. According to Butler, in giving an account, the narrator “establish[es] a relationship to the one to whom my account is addressed and whether both parties to the interlocution are sustained and altered by the scene of the address (2005:50) . Butler continues, “on the one hand, it [narrative] is an effort to communicate information about oneself; yet on the other hand, it recreates and constitutes anew the tacit presumptions about communication and rationality that structure the mode of address.” The open-ended processes of identity construction linked to media as suggested by Hermes (1999) imply that it is especially useful to link to the interest in the specificity of local experience through practices oriented to media. This proposal is reflected in how my interlocutors spoke of their lives and their media use – not as media practices in isolation but as media *related* practices (Hobart 2010, emphasis mine).

This is where the use of narrative as an ethnographic tool comes into its own. If this study was restricted solely to participant observation, or to the textual analysis of what my interlocutors were viewing, the results would not be able to provide a clear picture of how media use inspires agency and informs the gendered self. By collecting media biographies, I was able to provide a more rounded understanding of the role of media practice in the lives of the women I interviewed. Through the lens of narrative, media

practice becomes a component of self practice because the social construction of self is now recognised as a knowing construction of self (Gauntlett 2002).

10.8 Looking Ahead

This research has laid out, in a preliminary fashion, an example of how media practice is shaped by social relations. I am using the term ‘preliminary’ in order to indicate that the findings I emerged with differ from the presumptions that I had expected to find when planning this research. Despite this, by taking media use into account as ‘practice’ was an efficacious orientation for this particular study of media use and agency. What I found was evidence to support a theoretical premise, that is, engaging with media technologies serves to inform the performative self by permeating the culturally determined structures that are presented by social discourse. The social actor is then able to institute a personal agency in order to implement what constitutes a viable course of action which is itself in turn informed by their social networks. I am nominating this thesis as an example of the kind of media anthropology that is made possible by considering media biographies in conjunction with practice. I believe that this approach to media anthropology has the potential to explore new perspectives in social practice that would serve to increase our understanding of the motivations and purposes that drive personal agency as it is informed by media technologies and practices. This approach bears a relation to what is advocated by recent theorists in media practice such as Postill, Cauldry and Hobart (Bräuchler and Postill ed. 2010) in that the emphasis is on the “plurality of field practices” (ibid:17) and the nuanced origins of personal agency within an individual’s social field. This is different again to the approach taken by Miller and Miller and Sinanan (2000, 2012) to media anthropology which instead focuses on the technology (the internet and Skyping, respectively) in order to understand processes of sociability and agency.

There are a multiplicity of divergent pathways that this study could progress along, with each approach encouraging new epistemological methods of data gathering and analysis. It would be interesting to add a comparative element to this research, for example, to investigate if media works in a similar fashion in encouraging the manipulation of social discourse and stimulating personal agency in other cultures and societies. I feel that it would also be of great academic interest to plan for a longer range study of media biographies, that is, to perhaps find a group of interlocutors

willing to commit to such a study over the course of ten years or longer. Such a project would be able to meaningfully incorporate the media biographies of the children of these families in a more meaningful manner. However, I do feel that this study represents a way forward in the field of media anthropology in that it takes into account the long term practices of individuals as they move through time and space with a range of technologies that move with them. I have indicated here how such technologies are intertwined with practice to inspire new ways of living and thinking as a social person. Morley argues that these changes in technology do not necessarily represent changes in the way we live but changes in sociability (2000:193). This is evidenced by the differing uses and strategies employed by my interlocutors that make use of the ever-growing range of social uses of the internet, whether this is to blog about recent domestic upheavals, or just to watch soaps as and when one wishes. I would also suggest that it may be time to re-evaluate the importance of the domestic sphere and the technologies and practices therein given that this thesis has stressed the importance of home as a viable space for the production of power and knowledge.

10.9 Conclusion

This thesis has argued that the strategic use of popular media texts and their technologies are reflective of how the Japanese women I interviewed are able to explore new and diverse cultural practices, reaffirm those practices they are familiar with, and offer a forum from which to confidently construct and contest personal and social boundaries. Everything in life changes, but the fact that we are social beings embedded in social networks remains the same. Media practice changes too, as do the purposes to which it is put and how it meets the needs of the user. Media use remains constant in the lives of my interlocutors, despite the changing technologies and the changing circumstances of their lives and their families. Because of its quotidian nature, media practice supports the continuous formation of the Japanese self and it encourages particular expressions of agency. This thesis is also a direct response for the need for an agenda of research that increases our understanding of how media aids in the production of self and subjectivity.

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皆様へ

私はロンドン大学に付属している東洋およびアフリカ調査研究機関（SOAS）にて人類学を学んでいます。2006年には“メディアにおける人類学”の分野において、同大学からその功績に対する賞とともに大学院修士課程を取得いたしました。

今回、博士号取得を目指すにあたり、イギリス在住の日本人女性について調査を行っています。私が興味を持っているのは、イギリス在住の日本人女性たちはどのようにしてメディア（TVやインターネット）媒体を家庭で利用しているか、と言う事です。例えば、日本のDVDやJSTV（日本語衛星放送）は日本での生活を思い起こさせるか、お子様がいらっしゃる家庭では日本の文化や言葉を学ばせるために利用しているのか、またはそれらを利用せずイギリスの番組のみなのか、といったような事です。

この研究をしようと思い立ったのは私自身の経験からなのです。私はアメリカ人ですが両親ともメキシコ人でありバイリンガルの家庭で育ちました。子供の頃、私にとってテレビは2つの文化を保持するためにとても重要な役割をしてくれました。そして今また英国に住み二重国籍を持つ3人の子供達と暮らしています。

この調査の開始は11月と12月に始めたいと思っています。第一段階として、皆さんの一般情報とともにイギリスと日本でのテレビへの関わり方に関してご意見を伺えればと考えております。質問はこのようなものになると思います。

- ご出身と英国に来た理由。
- 英国のテレビについてどの点が好きですか／嫌いですか。
- テレビを見ない場合、代わりに何をしますか。
- 日本でテレビに関する思い出はありますか。また大好きだった番組は何ですか。
- JSTVを利用していますか。他に日本の番組への受信をお持ちですか。
- お子様がいる場合、彼らは何の番組を見ていますか。

先日は、マンチェスターにある日本語補修校にお子様を通わせていらっしゃる女性の方々にお会いしてきました。また近日にはエディンバラへ出向く事になっています。今後の調査に当たりロンドンで私の研究に参加して下さる日本人女性を増やしたいと思っています。Eメールでのやりとりを主にするつもりですが、調査の段階では何度かチャールトンハウス（IIEL）を訪れ、みなさんと直接お会いしながら調査についての話ができればと思っています。

第一段階での調査は12～18ヶ月を予定しています。

私の日本人の友達が通訳／翻訳を手伝ってくれますので、やり取りに關しましては英語、日本語のどちらでも皆さんのやりやすい方を選んでください。全ての情報に關しましては厳重に管理しプライバシーが他に漏れる事はありません。

この手紙に私の名刺を同封いたしました。何か質問等があればお気軽に連絡をください。

このたびはお時間を割いてくださったことに感謝をしております。

皆さんの参加に伴い私の調査研究が人類学で興味深いものになる事を楽しみにしています。

シルヴィア・シンプソン

Hello

My name is Sylvia Simpson. I am an MPhil student in Anthropology at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, part of the University of London). I received my MA with Merit from SOAS in 2006 in the field of Anthropology of Media.

For my PhD project I am hoping to study how Japanese women in the UK use television in the home to learn about British life, or if Japanese language DVD's or JSTV are used to think about and remember life in Japan, and if there are children in the family, how Japanese women may use television to help their children learn about Japan and Japanese language or just to enjoy English programmes.

The idea for this study has come from my own experience. I am American but my heritage is Mexican and I come from a bi-lingual family. Now I find myself in the UK with 3 children who have dual nationality.

I hope to begin the first stage of this project in November and December. During this first stage I will be interested in just collecting general information about yourself and your experience of television both in Britain and in Japan. Some of the questions I will be asking are:

- Where are you from in Japan and why did you come to the UK
- What do you like or don't like about television in Britain
- If you don't watch television, what do you do instead
- What are your memories of television in Japan and what were your favourite programmes
- Do you have JSTV or other access to Japanese programmes
- If you have children, what do they watch on television

I am hoping to find a small group of women who would be interested in sharing this kind of information with me. I will mostly keep in touch through e-mail if possible but I will arrange to visit Charleton House (IIEL) several times throughout this study to share conversations together face-to-face. This part of the project would last about 10 to 12 months. I have a friend who will help me with translations so you can feel free to communicate in either English or Japanese. Everything will be conducted with utmost confidentiality and privacy.

I have included my *meishi* with this letter. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this letter. I am looking forward to starting what I think will be a very interesting study. I hope you will share this experience with me.

Best regards,

Sylvia Simpson

(Appendix B)

Lymm High School Questionnaire: 07.11.09

Name (お名前) :

Age (年齢) :

Thank you for considering my questionnaire. I would first like to ask some questions about yourself and the family: (あなたご自身とご家族についての質問です。)

- How many children are in the family and what is their age:

(お子様がいらっしゃる方は、お子様方の年齢をお書きください。)

Boys:

Girls:

- What part of Japan are you from? (ご出身はどちらですか? 例: 広島県 - 西日本)
- Where is your partner/husband from? (パートナーの方のご出身はどちらですか?)
- How long have you been in the UK? (UK 滞在期間)
- How long have you been in the Manchester area? (マンチェスターでの滞在期間)
- How did you come to live in Britain? (イギリスに住みはじめたきっかけ)
- Do you feel this is a permanent move? Do you hope to return to Japan someday?
(イギリスには永住のおつもりですか? それともいつかは日本に本帰国したいとお思いですか?)
- Did you have a job in Japan? What did you do?
(日本ではお仕事をされていましたが? その職業は何でしたか?)
- Have you worked in the UK? What did you do, or if you are working now, what do you do?

(イギリスでの就職経験はありますか？その職業は何でしたか？現在働いておられる方もその職業をお書きください)

This next page is about your media use here in the UK:

(UKでのメディアの活用方法についての質問です。)

- **How many televisions are in your home?** (家に何台のテレビがありますか？)
- **What is the brand of your television(s)?** (お持ちのテレビのブランドは何ですか？)
- **Do you use satellite, cable or freeview?**
(サテライト、ケーブルテレビ、フリービュー等をご使用ですか？)
- **Which media company do you use, for example, Sky or Virgin?**
(上記の答えが Yes の場合、どちらの会社と契約されていますか？)
- **Do you have JSTV?** (JSTV を契約されていますか？)
- **What do you enjoy watching on television? Can you please name two programmes.** (どんな番組が好きですか？ 2つの番組名をお書きください。)

1.

2.

- **How many computers are in your home? PC or Mac?**
(ご家庭には何台のコンピューターがありますか？)

Desktop_____

Laptop_____

- **What is your most enjoyable activity online?**
(最もアクセスするウェブの種類は何ですか？例：ショッピング／YouTube etc…)
- **How many game consoles do you have at home? _____**
(何台のゲーム機をお持ちですか？)

- How many portable hand-held units? _____
(何台のポータブルゲーム機をお持ちですか? 例: DS/PSP など)
- Do you play any videogames? **Yes / No** If yes, please name some titles you enjoy playing:
(あなたご自身はビデオゲームをされますか? Yes の場合、そのゲームソフト名)
- Do you listen to the radio? **Yes / No** If yes, what do you enjoy listening?
(ラジオを聞きますか? Yes の場合、その番組名または種類)
- Do you have an iPod? **Yes / No** If yes, can you please name a few of your favourite artists at the moment?
(iPod をお持ちですか? Yes の場合、よく聞くアーティスト名をお書きください。)

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this short questionnaire. I would be grateful if you would consider participating further in this study. I am hoping that together we can produce valuable information about media use in Britain while making new friends and having a pleasurable experience.

(この度は質問にお答えくださりありがとうございました。今後も皆様とご一緒に、日本人の方のイギリスでのメディアの活用についての貴重な情報を収集できれば幸いです。)

Please include your contact details if you would like to continue:

(今後もし協力いただける方は、連絡先をご記入ください。)

Address:

Email:

(Appendix C)

Lymm High School – December 2009

Thank you once again for your participation in my study. If it is not too much trouble, could you please answer the next few questions:

再度、私の研究にご参加いただきありがとうございます。よろしければいくつかの質問にお答えください。

Do you use Skype or any other internet telephone service?

スカイプ等のインターネット回線を使った電話を使用していますか？

はい

- **If yes, do you use it for international calls only or do you use it for local calls as well?**

「はい」と答えた方 - 国際電話のみの使用ですか、それともイギリス国内にも使用されていますか？

国際電話のみ

- **If yes, do you use it for personal calls, work-related calls, or both?**

「はい」と答えた方 - その電話は個人的な通話のためですか、それとも仕事関連にもお使いですか？またはその両方ですか？

個人的に

Do you have a Kanji application on your mobile phone?

ご使用の携帯電話では漢字の（日本語の）使用が可能ですか？

不可能

Have you ever followed an entire Japanese drama series on You Tube?

日本のドラマ全話を YouTube でご覧になった事がありますか？

はい

- **If yes, what was the title?**

「はい」と答えた方 - それは何と言うドラマですか？

たくさんあって書ききれません。

Are there any other Japanese programs you enjoy watching on You Tube?

その他に YouTube でご覧になっている日本の番組はありますか？

なし

(Appendix C)

Lymm High School – December 2009

I will contact you once again at the end of January with another questionnaire to find out how you remember using television, radio, the internet, etc. in Japan.

この度は、再度アンケートにご協力くださりありがとうございました。
一月の終わり頃には、日本で活用していたメディアについて新たなアンケートを用意するつもりですので、皆さんからのご協力をお願いできれば幸いです。

I would like to wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas and New Year.
皆さんにとって良いクリスマス&年越しでありますように。

シルヴィア・シンプソン

Sylvia Simpson

(Appendix D)

Edinburgh Questionnaire: 12.09

Thank you for considering my questionnaire. I would first like to ask some questions about yourself and the family: (あなたご自身とご家族についての質問です。)

- How many children are in the family and what is their age:

(お子様がいらっしゃる方は、お子様方の年齢をお書きください。)

Boys:

Girls:

- What part of Japan are you from? (ご出身はどちらですか? 例: 広島県 – 西日本)
- Where is your partner/husband from? (パートナーの方のご出身はどちらですか?)
- How long have you been in the UK? (UK 滞在期間)
- How long have you been in Edinburgh? (Edinburghでの滞在期間)
- How did you come to live in Britain? (イギリスに住みはじめたきっかけ)
- Do you feel this is a permanent move? Do you hope to return to Japan someday?
(イギリスには永住のおつもりですか? それともいつかは日本に本帰国したいとおっしゃいますか?)
- Did you have a job in Japan? What did you do?
(日本ではお仕事をされていましたが? その職業は何でしたか?)
- Have you worked in the UK? What did you do, or if you are working now, what do you do?
(イギリスでの就職経験はありますか? その職業は何でしたか? 現在働いておられる方もその職業をお書きください)

This next page is about your media use here in the UK:

(UK でのメディアの活用方法についての質問です。)

- How many televisions are in your home? (家に何台のテレビがありますか?)
- What is the brand of your television(s)? (お持ちのテレビのブランドは何ですか?)
- Do you use satellite, cable or freeview?
(サテライト、ケーブルテレビ、フリービュー等をご使用ですか?)
- Which media company do you use, for example, Sky or Virgin?
(上記の答えが Yes の場合、どちらの会社と契約されていますか?)
- Do you have JSTV? (JSTV を契約されていますか?)
- What do you enjoy watching on television? Can you please name two programmes. (どんな番組が好きですか? 2つの番組名をお書きください。)

1.

2.

- How many computers are in your home? PC or Mac?
(ご家庭には何台のコンピューターがありますか?)

Desktop_____ Laptop_____
- What is your most enjoyable activity online?
(最もアクセスするウェブの種類は何ですか? 例: ショッピング/YouTube etc...)

- How many game consoles do you have at home? _____
(何台のゲーム機をお持ちですか?)
- How many portable hand-held units? _____
(何台のポータブルゲーム機をお持ちですか? 例: DS/PSP など)
- Do you play any videogames? **Yes / No** If yes, please name some titles you enjoy playing:
(あなたご自身はビデオゲームをされますか? Yes の場合、そのゲームソフト名)

- Do you listen to the radio? **Yes / No** If yes, what do you enjoy listening?
(ラジオを聞きますか? Yes の場合、その番組名または種類)
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「はい」と答えた方 - 国際電話のみの使用ですか、それともイギリス国内にも使用されていますか?
- If yes, do you use it for personal calls, work-related calls, or both?
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Do you have a Kanji application on your mobile phone?

ご使用の携帯電話では漢字の（日本語の）使用が可能ですか?

Have you ever followed an entire Japanese drama series on You Tube?

日本のドラマ全話を YouTube でご覧になった事がありますか?

- If yes, what was the title?
「はい」と答えた方 - それは何と言うドラマですか?

Are there any other Japanese programs you enjoy watching on You Tube?

その他に YouTube でご覧になっている日本の番組はありますか?

Thank you for taking the time to fill in this short questionnaire. I would be grateful if you would consider participating further in this study. I am hoping that together we can produce valuable information about media use in Britain while making new friends and having a pleasurable experience.

(この度は質問にお答えくださりありがとうございました。今後も皆様と一緒に、日本人の方のイギリスでのメディアの活用についての貴重な情報を収集できれば幸いです。)

I will contact you once again at the end of January with another questionnaire to find out how you remember using television, radio, the internet, etc. in Japan.

この度は、再度アンケートにご協力くださりありがとうございました。
一月の終わり頃には、日本で活用していたメディアについて新たなアンケートを用意するつもりでありますので、皆さんからのご協力をお願いできれば幸いです。

I would like to wish you and your family a wonderful Christmas and New Year.
皆さんにとって良いクリスマス&年越しでありますように。

シルヴィア・シンプソン

Sylvia Simpson

(Appendix E – English)

Questionnaire: January 2010

Childhood: Please try to remember from young age up to early teenage.

Can you remember some of your favourite television programs when you were a child, both Japanese and Western?

Can you remember what you liked about them?

What is the first film you can recall seeing at the cinema?

Can you remember any big news stories from childhood?

How did you hear about these big news stories? Can you remember seeing this news on television? How about newspapers or magazines?

Can you remember which newspapers your parents read?

Can you remember the titles of the books you most enjoyed at this age?

Did you enjoy listening to music as a child? Can you remember what you enjoyed listening to?

(Appendix E – English)

Can you remember what media technology you had at home as a child, such as colour television or stereo? Can you recall when you first had the latest thing, for example a VCR or Nintendo Famicom?

Teenage Years: These questions are very similar, just at a different stage in life.

Which television programmes did you enjoy at this age, again both Japanese and Western?

Can you remember why you enjoyed these programmes?

What films did you like best at this age?

Which were your favourite actors and actresses from this time?

What news stories made the biggest impression on you at this age? Can you remember if you followed any news stories closely because you were interested?

Do you remember reading any newspapers? Which newspapers did you prefer, and why?

What did you enjoy reading at this age? Please list some of your favourite books, magazines and comics from this time.

(Appendix E – English)

What music did you most enjoy? What were some of your favourite artists?

How did you show your support for your favourite artists? For example, were you able to attend any concerts?

Can you remember what your newest technology was at this age?

Once again, thank you for your kind and generous answers. I hope you have enjoyed revisiting these memories. The next questionnaire will be in about 6 weeks and again I will be asking similar questions but I will focus on your adult years in Japan before you came to the UK.

All the best,

Sylvia

(Appendix E – Japanese)

アンケート：2010年1月

子供の頃：幼い頃にまでさかのぼり思い出す限りお答え下さい。

どんなテレビ番組を見ていましたか？ 日本の番組だけですか、それとも外国の番組も見ていましたか？

その番組のどんなところが好きでしたか？

初めて見た映画は何でしたか？

子供時代に知った一大事件／ニュースは何でしたか？

どのようにしてこれらの一大事件／ニュースを知りましたか？ テレビのニュースで見た時の事を覚えていますか？ また新聞や雑誌で読んだ記憶はありますか？

あなたのご両親が読んでいた新聞は何ですか？

子供の頃、大好きだった本はありますか？そのタイトルも書いて下さい。

音楽はよく聴いていましたか？ 何をよく聴いていましたか？

子供の頃に家庭で利用していたメディア機器は何でしたか？（例：カラーテレビ／ステレオなど）またその頃にはじめて入手した最新の物は何でしたか？（例：ビデオ機器／任天堂ファミコンなど）

10代の頃：上記の“子供の頃”とよく似た質問です。

10代の頃によく見たテレビ番組は何でしたか？ 日本の番組だけですか、それとも外国の番組も見ていましたか？

どうしてその番組が好きだったか覚えていますか？

10代の頃、一番好きだった映画は何ですか？

俳優／女優で誰が一番好きでしたか？

10代の頃、一番印象に残っているニュースは何ですか？ そのニュースを詳しく知る事になった理由は何ですか？

新聞を読んでいましたか？ その新聞の名前は？ その新聞を読んでいた理由は何ですか？

何を読んでいましたか？ 好きだった本／雑誌／マンガのタイトルをいくつか書いて下さい。

どんなタイプの音楽が好きでしたか？ また好きなアーティスト／歌手の名前を書いて下さい。

上記の好きなアーティスト／歌手をどんな方法でサポートしていましたか？
(例：コンサートに行く／ファンクラブなど)

あなたが10代の頃の最新のテクノロジーは何でしたか？

ご協力ありがとうございました。次回のアンケートは、“イギリスに来る前の大人時代”に焦点を当てて行いたいと思います。6週間後にこれとよく似た質問形式を送らせていただく予定です。ご参加いただければ幸いです。

皆様のご協力に深く感謝しています。

シルヴィア

SOAS Research Data Consent Form

Project title:	Japanese Women in the UK and Their Media
Project funders:	This project is part-time and self funded
Project partners:	This research project has been approved by SOAS (The School of Oriental and African Studies). My supervisor is Dr. Dolores Martinez
Project coordinator:	Sylvia Simpson (MPhil) 8 Ruthin Road Blackheath London SE3 7SH sylvia.simpson@virgin.net 0794 104-0105
Project objectives:	This project hopes to analyse how Japanese women in the UK use media and communication technologies to create an understanding of themselves and their lives as British residents while still maintaining a cultural identity as a Japanese person
Reasons for data collection:	The data is primarily collected through recorded interviews which will be partially structured with pre determined questions but will also allow for casual and spontaneous questioning. There is also some email contact if the participant agrees to this beforehand.
Data recipients:	This data will not be distributed to any external individuals or organizations outside of SOAS
Countries to which the data may be a transferred:	Data about you gathered in the course of your participation in this project may be transferred to countries or territories outside the European Economic Area for purposes connected with this project and similar future projects, subject to appropriate safeguards to protect the security and confidentiality of your data.

Security measures:	This data will remain in my sole personal possession during the life of the project. In order to maintain the authenticity of the data collected I will use the first and second names of the participants unless the participant has requested full anonymity in which case pseudonyms will be employed.
Methods of publication:	The data collected in the course of this project will be published as a completed PhD project to be submitted by December 2013. Research participants will be identified unless full anonymity has been requested. This anonymity will be employed throughout the life of the project and any other articles and presentations which may be the result of this research.
Methods of anonymisation:	In order to maintain the anonymity of the participants of this project where requested I will refer to them with a coded initial followed by <i>san</i> when recording data. I will use random Japanese forenames where appropriate and random British surnames where appropriate.
Archiving:	The completed data set will be archived with myself. The participants will maintain their identities, anonymous or otherwise through the archive.
Future use:	Data about you gathered in the course of your participation in this project may be used in similar future research projects, by researchers at SOAS or elsewhere. We cannot predict all the ways in which your data may be used. However at this point in time there are no plans to use this data beyond the purposes stated above.

Data Protection Statement

Information about you which is gathered in the course of this research project, once held in the United Kingdom, will be protected by the UK Data Protection Act and will be subject to SOAS's Data Protection Policy. You have the right to request access under the Data Protection Act to the information which SOAS holds about you. Further information about your rights under the Act and how SOAS handles personal data is available on the Data Protection pages of the SOAS website (<http://www.soas.ac.uk/infocomp/dpa/index.html>), and by contacting the Information Compliance Manager at the following address: Information Compliance

Manager, SOAS, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG, United Kingdom
(e-mail to: dataprotection@soas.ac.uk).

Copyright Statement

By completing this form, you permit SOAS and the project coordinator to edit, copy, disseminate, publish (by whatever means) and archive your contribution to this research project in the manner and for the purposes described above. You waive any copyright and other intellectual property rights in your contribution to the project, and grant SOAS, the project coordinator and other researchers a non-exclusive, free, irrevocable, worldwide license to use your contribution for the purposes of this project and similar future research projects.

Research Subject Declaration

I confirm that I have read the above information relating to the research project. I consent to my information being used in the manner and for the purposes described, and I waive my copyright and other intellectual property rights as indicated. I understand that I may withdraw my consent to participate in the project, and that I should contact the project coordinator if I wish to do so.

1. Name:

Date:

Signature:

2. Researchers Name:

Date:

Signature: